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Protestant Englishman

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Guarded against the

A R T S and A R G U M E N T S

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Romish Priests and Emissaries.

Recommended, more particularly, to those Protestants who have Family-Connexions with Roman Catholics, or any Dependence upon the great Houses of the Roman Catholick Religion.

By J O H N W H I T E, B. D. K.

Some time Fellow of St. John's College, in Cambridge.

For we are not as many who corrupt the Word of God: But as of Sincerity, but as of God, in the Sight of God, speak we in Christ. 2 Cor. ii. 17.



L O N D O N :

Printed for C. DAVIS, opposite Gray's-Inn Gate, Holborn;
and L. DAVIS, at Lord Bacon's Head, in Fleet-Street.

M. DCC. LIII.

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Protestant Englishman

Confronted against the

ARTS and ARGUMENTS

OF

Romish Priests and Prelates.

Recommended, more particularly, to those Protestants who have Family-Connections with Roman Catholics, or any Dependence upon the Great Houses of the Roman Catholic's Religion.

By JOHN WHITE, B.D.

Second Edition, Published by St. John's College, in Cambridge.

For the Author, and for the Booksellers, the World is Open. The Author's Name, and the Title of the Work, are printed on the Title-Page, in the Year of the first Edition, 1711.

LONDON

Printed by C. Davis, at the Sign of the Green Dragon, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, near St. Dunstons Church, in the Year of the first Edition, 1711.

P R E F A C E.

WHEN the Gentlemen of the *Mission*, or others of the Church of *Rome*, who concern themselves with the Conversion of Protestants here in *England*, make their Attempts upon the lower, or middle Ranks of Men, (which indeed are observed to be the Game they have been chiefly pursuing for some past Years) there is Reason to believe, their Business is not so much to convince their Understandings, as to manage their Spirits, not to enter into the Merits of the Controversy between us, by endeavouring to shew them, from Scripture, Antiquity, and Reason, the Falseness of the *Protestant*, and the Truth of the *Popish* Doctrines and Religion, but to infuse into them certain Prejudices *against* their own, and *in favour* of the *Roman Catholick* Religion, suited to that Cast and Turn of Mind, which they observe, or judge them to be of. To those who are seen to have a just and proper Regard to Rule and Order, or any tolerable Notion of Church-Communion, they talk of the

A Divisions,

Divisions, and numberless Sects, amongst *Protestants*: To men of *benevolent* and *charitable* Dispositions they flourish upon the *Charities* and *pious Foundations*, which are so much encouraged, and are every where to be seen, in their Church; as to Men of *devout* Tempers they magnify the *Devotions* of it: To those of darker and more gloomy Complexions they display the Rigours and Severities practised in it; And the Lovers of Virtue, Goodness, and good Men, they entertain with the *holy Lives* of their *Saints*, and with the *Crimes* and *Disorders*, real or supposed, of some of our first *Reformers*. These Suggestions and Pretences, besides their being suited to the Tempers and Inclinations of particular Men, are level to the Capacities of all, and therefore, I am satisfied, have made more Converts than their deepest, and most learned Arguments against the Religion of *Protestants*, or in Defence and Vindication of their own; just as, in Battle, the small Shot does frequently more Execution, than the heavy Artillery, which often grazes upon the Ground, or flies over the Heads of an Enemy. For this Reason I shall have, in the following Papers, a particular Regard to the abovementioned, and other Suggestions of the like Kind, and endeavour to furnish the Unlearned *Protestant* with such Considerations upon each, as, by God's Blessing, may hinder
their

their having any ill Influence and Effect upon him.

I am very sensible, that mere *Prejudices*, how just and legitimate soever, tho' they may reasonably *dispose* and *incline*, will not *determine* a prudent and well instructed Man, in the Choice of his Religion ; and therefore, have not only contriv'd to interweave, here and there, as Occasion was given, a sufficient Confutation of the grand Pretensions, and principal Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, but have also bestow'd one or two Sections, in shewing the *absolute Unlawfulness* of Communion with it. Which, by the bye, being made to appear, it will concern as well those, who are already *in*, to *come out* of that Church, as it does *us* to *keep out* of it.

Indeed the whole Plan of this Discourse is such, that tho' it was chiefly design'd for the Use of *Protestants*, to *guard them against the Crafts and Assaults of Romish Priests and Emisseries*, (who are now reported and believ'd, through the extraordinary Clemency of the Government, to swarm amongst us in greater Numbers, and to be more busy, bold, and successful in making Profelytes, than they have been in former times) yet it may be put, very properly, into the hands of *Papists*, and will serve, *indifferently*, to convert *Them* from the Error of their Ways, and to establish *Protestants*

in the Acknowledgment and Profession of the truth.

I shall make no Apology for the Length of it. For tho' it *has* indeed run out to a Length beyond what I at first intended, it is not, after all, so long, but that a much longer need be read, and carefully considered, by all those for whose Use chiefly it was written. The Situation of *such as depend upon, or are otherwise attached to great Families of the Roman Catholick Religion*, and also of *such as are nearly allied, by the Tyes of Affinity or Blood (especially that which is the nearest and tenderest of all others) to those of that Persuasion*, is so extremely perilous and exposed, that they had need be well guarded, and furnished with good Store of controversial Armour of this Sort, that they may be able to defend themselves against, and repel the Attacks which, it is almost sure, will be made upon them. But those who are actually attack'd and shaken, and in a State of Wavering between the two Religions, cannot, I am sure, answer it to God, nor (as one would think) to their own Consciences, if they surrender themselves without Reading and Thinking a good deal more than the few Sheets I here present them with will require of them.

Nayland, near Colchester,

Jan. 2, 1753.

THE
PROTESTANT
GUARDED, &c.

IT is much to be wished, that such Protestants as make no Profession of Learning themselves, tho' they be, otherwise, Persons of good Understandings, as soon as any Attempt is made upon them to seduce them to *Popery*, and the Church of *Rome*, would, *without Delay*, apply themselves to those *who watch for their Souls*, or to such others, if there be any such, as they may think more capable of assisting them; and that they would give those Gentlemen to understand, they hold themselves bound, as well in Duty, as in Prudence, and that it is, therefore, their full Purpose and Intent, to do so. Had this Method been taken by all, our Popish Adversaries would not have made amongst us, of late Years, so many Converts, as Report goes, and there is too much Reason to believe, they have done. And indeed, they would be more shy of attempting it. For I dare say, they would be loth, that the poor Talk, with which they commonly attack ordinary Men, should be reported to Men of

Sense and Learning, and perhaps also, afraid of being forced into a Controversy, which they feel themselves unable to manage and maintain.

For these Reasons (I say) one would earnestly wish, that all who are tamper'd with in order to their Perversion to the Church of *Rome*, would *forthwith* repair to their Parish Priests, (to whom, doubtless, they will always be welcome) or to such others as they have reason to believe, are better qualified, and will be willing, to give them proper Assistance. But as applying for *Pastoral Advice and Direction* is, now a days, in this, as in all other Cases, too much neglected, and almost grown out of Use, 'tis hoped the following Papers, if any one will seriously and attentively peruse them, will, in some Measure, supply the Want of it, and be of use to keep those busy Gentlemen from making any Impressions upon his Mind, to the Disadvantage of the *Protestant* Religion, and Church of *England*, and in favor of that of *Rome*, or to take out of it such Impressions as have been already, if any have been, made there. The Method I shall pursue is this :

First I shall shew, that those Prejudices which Papists commonly suggest against the Religion of Protestants, cannot, in reason, move any Protestant to renounce it.

Secondly, that the Prejudices they are wont to suggest in favor of the Church of *Rome* cannot reasonably incline him to embrace the Communion of *that* Church.

Thirdly, that there are many just and legitimate Prejudices against that Church, such as may
reason-

reasonably incline any thinking Man to suspect the Trueness and Purity of it, and to set his Mind against it.

Fourthly, that there are in it various Corruptions, and of such a Nature, that Communion with it cannot be held, without the greatest Danger and Hazard of Salvation, and moreover, that it is, in itself, absolutely unlawful, and, therefore, ought to be rejected by all faithful Christians.

And lastly, that the Charge of Schism which the Papists bring against Protestants will not lie against *them*, but may be justly retorted upon the Papists themselves.

CHAPTER I.

Wherein the Prejudices commonly urged against the Protestant Religion, and Church of England, are removed.

SECT. I.

Shewing, that the Divisions among Protestants are no reasonable Motive to incline any one to forsake the Protestant Religion.

IT is too true, and a deplorable thing it is, that Protestants, and we, in particular, are greatly divided among our selves. And this is, (it seems) or is pretended to be, a mighty Scandal to those of the Church of *Rome*; and their Agents here scarcely (I suppose) ever fail to put those, whom they have a Design upon, in Mind of it. They tell them, we are no better than an innumerable

Huddle, and confus'd Heap of Societies, *Lutherans, Calvinists, Church of England Protestants, Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists*, and what not, all of us, almost, separating one from the other. And then they ask them, if they can think it likely, that where so little Peace and Unity is found, there should be any Truth. But that this is no Argument, nor so much as a reasonable Presumption against the Church of *England*, or any *Protestant-Church* whatever, will appear from the following Considerations.

First, that there were great Divisions, Schisms, and Heresies, in the most primitive, apostolic, Churches, those Churches which the Apostles themselves planted, and that, too, in their own Lifetimes. This plainly appears from all the Writings of the New-Testament. Our Saviour foretold, and gave Warning, that *many false Prophets would arise, and deceive many* (*Matth. xxiv. 11.*) about, or before the Time of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. And accordingly, we find, in almost every Page of the Apostolical Epistles, mention of them, as filling the Church with their impure and heretical Opinions, as well as making Schisms and Divisions in it. Do but read only the following Passages, *Eph. iv. 14. 2 Thess. ii. 7. 1 John ii. 18, 19. 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3. 2 Tim. i. 15. 2 Tim. ii. 18. 2 Tim. iii. 1—9. 1 Cor. i. 11, 12. also ch. iii. v. 3. ch. xi. 18, 19. and ch. xv. v. 12, 13. Gal. i. 6—9. Col. ii. 18—23. 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2. The whole Epistle of St. Jude, and Rev. ii. 8, 9, 14, 15. And particularly turn to Rom. xvi. 17. where you will find Schisms and Divisions in the Church of Rome; turn to (I say) and*

and carefully read these Passages, and then judge, if the Churches, in the very Days of the Apostles, were not defiled with Heresies, and afflicted with Schisms, as well as the *Protestant Churches* now are. And if it was no just and reasonable Matter of Reproach to the primitive and apostolical Churches, that they were torn and afflicted with Heresies and Schisms, it can be no Dishonor to the *Protestant Churches*, nor to our own in particular, and much less a Reason to forsake the Communion of any of them, that *they* are divided in like manner.

It is observable, that St. *Peter*, 2 *Pet.* ii. 1, 2. (one of the Places before quoted) speaking of false Prophets, takes notice, how that by reason of *many following their pernicious Ways, the Way of Truth shall be evil spoken of.* Here you may see that *the Way of Truth* is, nevertheless, *the Way of Truth*, because many forsake it, *following their own pernicious Ways.* And therefore our Church, or any other Church, may be *the Way of Truth*, for any thing our Divisions will prove to the contrary, and notwithstanding any Controversies and Disputes, where-with it may be agitated within it self, or any Schisms and Separations that may be made from it.

And indeed, if this be a good and reasonable Way of arguing against the Credit and Reputation of any Church, or the Goodness and Trueness of the Religion exercised therein, that *many Schisms, and Separations have been made from it*, it will bear as hard upon the Church of *Rome*, as it will upon any one of the *Protestant Churches*. It is (for example) no greater Reflection upon the *Church of England*, that the *Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists*, and other

other Sects, have divided themselves from it, than it is upon the Church of *Rome*, that we of the *Church of England*, with all the Sects that stand divided from us, together with all the *Lutherans*, and *Calvinists* abroad, have divided ourselves from that Church. And one of the *Greek Church* may as well reproach the whole *Latin Church* with the Divisions and Heresies that are in it, as the *Popish* part of the *Latin Church* can reproach the *Protestant* part of it, with the Divisions and Heresies that are in it. Nay, I go farther: A *Jew*, may as properly reproach our common *Christianity* with the Divisions that are among *Christians*, as any *Roman Catholic* can object to, or reproach *Protestantism* with the Divisions that are amongst *Protestants*. Suppose he were to say to some *Romish Missionary*, "You, I understand, are dealing with some of those whom you call *Protestants*, to persuade them to forsake their own, and to come over to your Church: and to this purpose, you urge them with the Schisms and Divisions among *Protestants*, while you (you say) are at perfect Unity amongst yourselves. Your Argument, or Motive, seems not unreasonable. But then, pray consider whither it will lead you. If you pursue it, it will lead you, if I mistake not, to renounce Christianity itself, and to become one of us. For, as far and wide as our Religion is spread, tho' we are scatter'd over the face of the whole Earth, we are almost as one, while you *Christians* are a confus'd Heap and Huddle of Sects, *Abyssenes*, *Coptes*, *Armenians*, *Nestorians*, Christians of the *Greek Church*, of the Church of *Rome*, of the Church of *England*, *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, and almost all of you withdrawing and separating one from another.

another." I say, if a *Jew* was to come upon and attack a *Romish Missionary*, while he was arguing with with a Protestant from the Divisions that are amongst us, and to turn in this manner his own Artillery upon himself, I dont see which Way he could escape, or how he could, without giving up Christianity, avoid owning, that all he had been saying, about the Schisms and Divisions of *Protestants*, was indeed trifling and impertinent.

In a word, there is no arguing, either *against* any Church, from the Dissentions that are found *in* it, or the Schisms and Separations that are made *from* it; nor yet, *for* any Church, merely from its being free from such Dissentions and Separations. The purest Church in the World may be distracted with them, while the corruptest shall be without them. And indeed, that the best Churches should most abound with them, may be rather expected, than the contrary, if we only consider whence they have their Original, and what causes they principally spring from. Now, according to the *Christian Theology*, the Devil is the Author of them. These are the Tares in the Parable; and our Saviour expressly tells us, he is the Enemy that sows them, by the help of ambitious, covetous, vain, or contentious Men, whom he stirs up and instigates to it. Hence the Apostle calls such Men *Ministers of Satan*, 2 Cor. xi. 15. and their Impure Doctrines are call'd *Doctrines of Devils*, 1 Tim. iv. 1. And those who had forsaken the wicked Errors they had been entangled in, and been brought, by Instruction, to *Repentance, and the Acknowledgment of the Truth*, are said to be recover-
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ed from the Snare of the Devil, wherein they had been, before, *taken Captive*, 2 *Tim.* ii. 25, 26. The Devil then being the principal Author of Heresies and Schisms in the Church, we are next to enquire what Churches he is most likely, and, in common Policy, will chuse, to exercise and disturb therewith. The purest, or the corruptest Churches? surely the purest. For when a Church lies in gross and abominable Corruptions, 'tis not likely he should chuse to disturb it much with Controversies and Disputes, lest the Ferment thereby occasion'd should make it refine, and throw off the Corruptions it abounds with. And therefore, altho' (as I said before) there is no arguing *for*, or *against* any Church, from the Unity, or the Divisions that are in it, from the stubborn Adherence of its Members to it, or their Defection, in great Numbers, from it; yet, of the two, it may rather seem the more credible Opinion, that Divisions will be more rise *in*, and *from*, those Churches, where Christianity is profess'd in greatest Purity.

I may not conclude this Head, without observing, that there is something peculiarly absurd, and shameless, in *Papists* upbraiding *English Protestants*, above all others, with the *English Heresies*, and *Schisms*; inasmuch as they have been the great Causes of all the *Heresies* and *Schisms*, which have troubled us. It is well known, that, as the *Church of England* (being the Bulwark of the Protestant Religion) is the greatest Object of their Spight, so they have made it their Business, ever since the Days of the Reformation, by all manner of Artifices, to divide and ruin it. And after this, are we to be
twit-

twitted with our Divisions, by these very Men? Sometimes they ask, how we can think our Religion is a true Religion, and our Church a true Church of God, when it is so divided? Which is exactly as if the Enemy who came, while Men slept, and sowed Tares among the Wheat, should afterwards come to the Husbandman, and say to him, — Surely thou didst not sow good Seed in thy Field; For if thou didst, *Whence has it Tares?* — At other Times, they will tell us, that as our Church is the Sanctuary and great Support of the Protestant Interest and Religion, so it has pleased God, in his just Judgment, to send upon it the Spirit of Error and Division, and to disunite it, more than other Churches. Which, in Effect, is the same, as if a Man should creep privily into his Neighbour's House, and set it on fire, and, the next Day, come to him, and gravely tell him, he was very much afraid, this same House was an ill-gotten Possession, or built with the Wages of Unrighteousness, and that God, therefore, in his just Judgment, had sent Fire from Heaven to consume it. This is their Way of talking. And, as unreasonable and foolish as it is, it has had too much Effect among many of our People, who not knowing, or not considering, from whence *Heresies* and *Schisms* in the Church, and particularly our own, have sprung, have been strangely affected with the dismal Accounts, or the ridiculous Representations which our *Romish* Adversaries have made of them, and thought more meanly of the *Protestant* Religion, if not utterly forsaken it, upon their Account. May all Protestants come, at last, to a better Sense of these Things, and,

and, being thoroughly apprized whom they are gratifying by their Divisions, how great Advantages our Enemies make of them, and how, in all Probability, they will, one Day, prove our Ruin, may they, (I say) thoroughly sensible of these Things, leave off Contention, and no longer needlessly sever themselves from one another; and may we, in particular, of this Nation be gathered together in one holy Fellowship and Communion, the Communion of that Church, which, by the good Providence of God, is establish'd among us.

S E C T. II.

That the Crimes, pretended or real, of some eminent Reformers, are no just Prejudice against the Protestant Religion.

THE most eminent of our *Reformers*, abroad were *Calvin* and *Luther*; and the Generality of *Protestants*, there, follow, in the main, the Doctrine of one, or the other. The former of these might have his Faults, and we'll say, he had; and who are without 'em. But no Crimes, with any colour of Truth, can be objected to him. On the contrary, he was very exact and regular in his Life. *Luther* has some things charged upon him, which, in the account of those of the Church of *Rome*, are grievous and heinous Crimes, but, if truly represented, and impartially consider'd, will appear to be none at all. The principal Indictments against him are — the *Petulancy of his Language*, and the *rough manner of treating his Adversaries* — *Disobedience to his Superiors* — *breaking his Vow of Celibacy*, and *marrying Catharine Bora, who had been, her self, a Nun*. As

to

to the rough and petulant Manner of treating his Adversaries, the Charge is false, at least so far as two or three Years after he appear'd in the Character of a Reformer, all which Time he treated both his Superiors, and his other Opposers, in a mild, decent, and submissive Manner, and never allow'd himself the Liberty to do otherwise, till after his Books had been publickly burnt at *Rome*, and himself every where treated with the utmost Ribaldry and Indignity; which, if it will not altogether excuse, must be allow'd, however, a great Mitigation of his Fault. Nor did he cast off the Authority of his Superiors, and set up for himself, till, after long waiting, he plainly found there was no Hope of seeing the Abuses, complain'd of, reformed in a regular Way. As to breaking his Vow of perpetual Celibacy, and afterwards marrying, we have this to say, — that he took the Vow upon him in a great Fright and Agony of Mind, — against the Consent of his Parent — that all Vows are not binding, some of them being unlawful, and that this was such, it being unlawful for any Person to oblige himself, by solemn Vow, to any State of Life, which he is not certain he shall have Grace and Strength to abide in, with Innocence and Peace. And as to her whom he chose for his Wife, she had been, indeed, formerly, a Nun, but, of her voluntary Motion, had laid aside the Veil, (which she might do, perhaps, as lawfully as he) and signified her Intention for the married State, a great while before he had any Acquaintance with her. A great deal more might be said for him; but as I study Brevity, and as his Character and Conduct are not likely to be so much,
and

and so often, bespatter'd by our *Missionaries* on this side the Water, where we did not reform, as they well know, after his Plan, I shall say no more in his Justification.

The *Missionaries* here are apt to flourish most, when they get amongst weak and unlearned *Protestants*, upon the Character and Crimes of our King *Henry VIII.* They scarce ever fail (I suppose) to draw his Picture, and present it to those whom they hope to seduce from us; and *we have sometimes known, when they have thought it not improper or unseasonable, to entertain Men upon their sick and languishing Beds, with the whole Story of his Life, pretending to admire how they could think of continuing, one Moment, in that Religion, which so wicked a Man brought in among us.* Should you ever be attack'd upon this Head, you may reply,

That *That* Prince was not so much *ours*, as he was *theirs*. For, in every point but one, he was a rigid *Roman Catholic*, to the Day of his Death. So that, let his Character be what it will, we have no manner of Concern in it. He did, indeed, quarrel with the *Pope*, for dissembling and shuffling with him, several Years together, and, thereupon, deprived him of his *Supremacy*, in these Kingdoms. But, in this, he did little more than other *Roman Catholic* States and Princes have done, upon Occasion. It is well known, that, in *France*, the Power of the *Pope*, at this Day, is but small; and in *Sicily*, they say, it is not greater than in *Great Britain*. And yet the Sovereigns of these Kingdoms are esteem'd good *Roman Catholics*. And if King *Henry's* taking away the Papal *Supremacy* did pave

the Way to the *Reformation*, and made it, as questionless it did, more easily effected in his Son's Days, it was far enough from being in his Intention, that it should do so.

And besides, if *K. Henry VIII*, who stript the Pope of his *Supremacy* in these Kingdoms, was an ill Man, the *Emperor Phocas*, who help'd him to it, was not a better. That *Emperor*, you must know, was at first, only a private Captain, but having gotten the *Emperor Mauritius* dethroned, and himself declared Emperor in his stead, he presently put him to Death, together with the Empress, and all their Children, and many Persons of great Quality besides, and in the Course of his Reign (as we are told) was not less infamous for his Lust and Cruelty, than *He*, whose Cruelty and Lust are rung continually in our Ears. This is the Man who bestowed upon the Bishop of *Rome*, *Boniface III*, the Title of *Oecumenical* or *Universal* Bishop, (a Title, by the way, which *Gregory the Great*, his next Predecessor but one, had call'd *Antichristian* and *profane*) in pure Gratitude, it seems, for the eminent Services and Compliments, which that Usurper and Tyrant had received from the Bishops of that See. Surely a better Reason for those of the Church of *Rome* to throw off the Supremacy of the Pope, than the Crimes of *Hen. VIII* are for our putting our selves again under it!

It may be further replied, that many Popes, who are at the Head of the Church, and esteem'd the very Center of Unity therein, nay, if we may believe their own Historians, a long Series and Succession of them, have been worse Men than *Hen. VIII* was. Their own Writers freely confess, because they can-

not deny, that great Numbers of their Popes have been Monsters of Men, and abandon'd to all sorts of Wickedness. And if we were dispos'd to use, or could satisfy our selves with using, such simple and ridiculous Arguments for the *Conversion of their* People, as they do for the *Perversion of ours*, the Lives of their Popes (to say nothing of their Cardinals, and other great Prelates) might be much more plausibly urged by *us*, against *their* Church, than that of *Hen. VIII.* can be by *them*, against *our* Church. But, thank God, we of the Church of *England* are better instructed, and have more Conscience, than to think it reasonable to abhor, or lawful to forsake, any Church, merely for the Faults and Disorders of those who have remarkably favor'd, or eminently promoted the Cause of it, nay, tho' they have presided, and born Authority in it. If our Reformers had seen nothing in the Church of *Rome* more deplorable than the personal Vices and Irregularities of those who have been the Heads, and chief Pastors of it, they would never have separated from her Communion. And if Frowardness, or Passion, or any strange unaccountable Frenzy had driven *them* to do it, *we* should have been ashamed to follow them in their Error, and would have made haste to unite ourselves again with those, from whom *we* were thus needlessly and imprudently separated.

But further yet: If it be a good Rule whereby to judge of the Truth or Goodness of any Church, or Religion, or Way of Religion, to consider the Lives and Characters of great Persons, who have eminently patronized and supported it, (tho', by the way, it should be again, and always, remembered,

bred, that our *K. Henry* was far enough from patronizing and supporting the present reform'd Church of *England*) if this (I say) be a good Rule, our common *Christianity*, I'm afraid, will be hurt by it. For the first Emperor who declared in favor of Christianity, who protected the Church by his Care, strengthened it by his Laws, and bestowed great Privileges upon it, was not free from Crimes, and particularly (they tell us) had his Hands as well as our *Henry*, embrued in Blood. Now if a *Jew*, or a *Gentile*, should take upon him to disparage our common *Christianity*, and to draw away any *Roman-Catholic* from the Profession of it, by objecting the Crimes of *Constantine*, who so powerfully protected it, would he be thought to reason well? would he be regarded? No, not at all. And why then should any *Roman Catholic* be thought to reason better, or be more regarded, when he undertakes, from the Crimes of *Henry*, to disprove the Truth, or the Goodness of our Reformation, and to persuade any one to renounce it?

The plain Truth is; as, on the one hand, a good Man, by the Subtlety of the Devil may he drawn in, to espouse Error, so, on the other hand, an ill Man, by the special Direction of God's Providence, may be excited to stand up for Truth. Of the latter Case, we have an Example in *Jehu*, King of *Israel*. He was no good Man; yet he wrought a good Reformation: he destroyed *Baal* out of *Israel*, and freed the Country from that sort of Idolatry, for ever after. *Howbeit*, (says the Text) *from the Sins of Jeroboam, the Son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, and took*

no Care to walk in the Law of the Lord God of Israel, with all his Heart, 2 Kings ch. x. 29—31. Give us only a good Reformation, and we shall not need to care from what Hand it comes, nor esteem it the less, because an unworthy Person, to serve some other Purposes, had a Concern in it, as we don't set ever the less Value upon our Redemption, because Judas, through Covetousness, was an Instrument therein. Let it be brought about by Men who have done ever so wickedly, we ought to rejoice in it, and praise God for it, adoring his infinite and unsearchable Wisdom, who knows how to bring Good out of Evil, to make even the Vices and Corruptions of Men work together, for promoting the Interests of Piety and Truth, and to be subservient to his glory.

S E C T. III.

That the Church of England is a merely Parliamentary Church, shewn to be a silly and groundless Prejudice.

THIS Imputation upon the Church of *England* was raised by the *Papists*, but has been taken up by the Gentlemen of the Free thinking way, and lately (it seems) by some others, whom we might have expected to have had a little more Discretion, than to join *them*, in so untrue, and groundless a Suggestion. But why they should call it a *Parliamentary* Church, I am to seek. For the *Parliament*, or the two Houses of *Parliament* alone, have no Supremacy, or Jurisdiction over it, that I know of. The *King* has; and it is fit he should

ould have it, that he may hold Church-men to heir Duty, keep them in Order, and restrain them, f there should be occasion, from spreading Sedition, and Rebellion amongst his Subjects, or doing any thing besides, that might be prejudicial to the State of the Kingdom, or the Prerogative of the Crown. And if some Character of this sort, that is diminishing and disparaging, must be fixt upon the Church of *England*, methinks it should rather be *that* of a *Regal* Church, than a *Parliamentary*; which, however, would not be so great a Disparagement and Diminution to it, as 'tis to the Kingdoms of *Spain*, *Portugal*, and some others, to be call'd (as they more properly may be) *Pontifical* Kingdoms. For our Kings have little more Authority in the external Affairs of the Church, than does of common Right belong to them, and is inherent in the Crown; whereas the Dominion which the Pope exercises in those Kingdoms is nothing but Encroachment and Usurpation, which the Sovereigns thereof tamely endure and crouch under.

The Authority of our Kings, in relation to the Church, is only about the external Affairs of it, as was before intimated. All the Powers of the Church that are merely spiritual, such as Preaching Administring the Sacraments, Ordaining, Excommunicating, and Absolving, are derived immediately from God, as much as they could have been, if the temporal Powers had no Authority at all, in relation to the Use and Exercise of them. If (for instance) the Kings of *England* have a Right to appoint the Persons who shall be consecrated Bishops, the Power and Right of consecrating and making

them Bishops is not in *them*, but in those spiritual Persons who lay Hands on them, and comes, through them, from God. And in Regard to Preaching, if they can make Laws, and set forth Injunctions to the Clergy, to be more instant in pressing upon the People some particular Duties, as more necessary to be inculcated at certain Times, or, at other Times, to refrain from meddling with other Points, the canvassing of which in the Pulpit may be of dangerous Consequence to the Peace either of Church or State, it will not thence follow, that the Substance of this Power and Administration is from them, and not from God. And the same may be said of all the other Powers and Functions of the Priesthood before mention'd. They are all from God; but, nevertheless, subject to be limited, restrain'd, inhibited (upon Occasion) or otherwise modified by the Sovereign Powers, as the Exigences either of Church or State shall require. Neither in all this is there any thing strange and extraordinary, or what need to offend a *Roman Catholic*, because in all the Countries which follow the Communion of the *Roman Church*, there is something of it, more or less. The Power of the Pope they all believe, belongs to him by divine Right, and to be given him of God. Yet it is everywhere *regulated* and *bounded*, in some Degree or other. And particularly, in *France*, it is so *cramped*, that the *Gallican Church* has as much the Appearance of a Church *Regal* or *Parliamentary*, as the Church of *England* may seem to have. If you have an Opportunity to examine the *Liberties* (as they are call'd) of the *Gallican Church*, you will find, amongst
other

other Things of the same kind, that “ the Pope cannot send into *France*, a *Legate à latere*, with a Power to reform, judge, collate, or dispense, or do such other Things as were wont to be specified in the Bulls of his Legation, but at the Desire or with the Consent and Approbation of *the most Christian King*. Neither can the *Legate* execute his Office, until he has promised the King in Writing and under his Seal, and sworn by his holy Orders, that he will not use the same *Legantine* Power in his Kingdom, any longer than it shall please the King; and that so soon as the King’s Pleasure shall be signified to him, he will cease and forbear; and that while he does use it, it shall be no otherwise exercised, than according to the Consent of, and in Conformity to the King, without attempting any thing to the Prejudice of general Councils, the Franchises, Liberties, and Privileges of the *Gallican* Church, and the Universities, and the public Estates of the Realm. And to this End, he is to present the Letters of his Legation to the Court of Parliament, where they shall be viewed, verified, publish’d, and registred, with such Cautions and Modifications as that Court shall think fit, for the good of the Realm; and all Processes shall proceed according to such Restrictions, and no otherwise.” Now let any one say, if the *King* and *Parliament* of *England* assume to themselves a greater Power over the Church of *England*, and the Bishops thereof, and lay greater Restraints upon them, as to the Use of the Keys, than the *French* King does upon the *Gallian* Church, and the Pope at the Head of it, who,

nevertheless, owns him for *the most Christian King*, and *eldest Son of the Church*.

I make no question, but his Holiness would readily receive and cherish the Church of *England*, as a sound Part of the Catholic Church, continuing as *Parliamentary* as it is, if, together with receiving the *Roman Faith*, or any good Part of it, it would only give him some little Shew, or faint Shadow of Authority in it, tho' it were much less than he now has in the *Gallican Church*. He did so, in the Days of *Q. Mary*. For the *Popish Church of England* was then as *Parliamentary* as the *Protestant Church of England* now is, that Queen, in order to the Re-establishment of the *Roman Faith*, having made as much use of *Parliaments*, and her *Supremacy* too, (tho' when the Work was done, she thought proper to drop it) as her Brother before her, or her Sister after her, did for the Establishment of the *Protestant Faith*. — And this, I think, is as much as need be said, to stop the Mouths of the Missionaries when they begin to be jocular, or more gravely to harangue you upon the *Parliamentary Church of England*.

S E C T. IV.

That there are no such Defects and Irregularities in the Mission or Ordination of Protestant Ministers, as should move any one to forsake the Communion of the Protestant Churches, to put himself into that of the Church of Rome.

THE Want of a lawful Mission, or of true and valid Ordinations in the Ministers of the *Protestant Churches*, is supposed to be one of the most common, as it certainly is one of the most popular

lar Subjects, which the *Missionaries* can talk upon, when they are dealing with *Protestants*, in order to pervert them to their Communion. Your Ministers (say they) are not sent in a regular Way, and so, have no Authority to preach the Gospel, and to administer the Sacraments thereof; and you have, therefore, no Ground to expect, that their Preaching will be of any Profit and Edification to you, or that the Sacraments by them administered will be attended with any saving Effects. In order to remove this Prejudice, I must proceed with some Distinction. For as the *Missions* or *Ordinations* of *Protestant* Ministers are not at all the same, they will require a separate Consideration.

Most of the *Protestants* abroad, having thrown off the *Episcopal* Order and Authority, have no other than *Presbyterian* Ordinations. Now, I shall not go about to defend these; for they are certainly irregular; and it is much to be wished, for the Credit of the *Protestant* Religion, that this Irregularity could be removed. It will be sufficient, however, if it can be shewn, that it would be both Folly and Impiety in any foreign *Protestant*, even tho' he were convinced of some Irregularities and Defects in the Mission of their present Pastors, to forsake their Communion, and to throw himself into the Communion of the Church of *Rome*. If indeed they had amongst them another Church, wherein the Mission of its Pastors is more regular and unexceptionable, and every thing necessary to Salvation is abundantly provided, nor any thing destructive of Salvation required of them, it would, then, be both their Prudence and their Duty to betake themselves

selves to that Church. But this, we know, is not ordinarily their Case. Unless they would live in the melancholy State of *Segregation*, or in external Communion with *no* Church at all (which every Christian, if it be possible, should avoid) they must continue where they are, or cast themselves into the Church of *Rome*. The Question then is, which of these is the most safe, and eligible? Surely, 'tis better and more safe, to abide in the Church where the true Word of God is preach'd, and the Sacraments rightly administered, altho' by Pastors somewhat irregularly appointed to their Office, than for the sake of a more regular Ministry, to go over to a Church, which obliges its Members to make Profession of the most evident Falsehoods, and broadest Contradictions, and to involve themselves, besides, in the Guilt of the foulest Idolatry.

I think it is a Principle of the Church of *Rome* that a simple Priest may ordain, if it be done by Delegation from the Pope: Now, methinks, a Necessity, such as the foreign Churches generally seem to lie under, is a more plausible Plea, and better Warrant for such Ordinations, than a Deputation from the Pope, where no necessity can be pretended: and a much firmer Ground of Acquiescence, both for those who submit to such Ordinations, and for those also who live under the Ministry of such as do submit to them.

And, I think also, that as to the Benefits and saving Effects of the Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, we may much more reasonably expect them, when we duly receive those Ordinances, tho' from the Hands of Pastors, not every way, perhaps,

perhaps, regularly appointed to their Office, than we can do, when we receive them, *mutilated and mangled*, from Pastors more regularly appointed to it; for instance, when we receive the Communion in both kinds from a Minister *presbyterianly* ordain'd, than when we receive it in one kind only, tho' from the Hands of a Priest, ordain'd by the greatest Prelate, or of the Prelate himself. For *that* (if we would speak properly) is not the Sacrament which our Lord instituted and ordain'd, but *another*, of their own Institution and Ordination.

We of the Church of *England* were so happy in our Reformation, as to preserve the primitive Order of Bishops, and by *these, our* Ordinations, as all ought to be, are performed. Nor can it be pretended, with any Shew of Reason, that there was any Breach, in the Succession of our Bishops, from those of the Church of *Rome*. So that if the Bishops of *that* Church are rightly and duly consecrated, those of *our* Church must be so too.

There is, indeed, a ridiculous Fable, of I know not what Consecration of *Archbishop Parker*, from whom the *Protestant* Succession of Bishops and Priests takes its Rise, as if it were perform'd in a Tavern. But this is a shameless Forgery, and not half so credible, as the Story of Pope *Joan*, or of Pope *John XII.* ordaining a Deacon in a Stable. That Archbishop was consecrated in *Lambeth Chapel*, as plainly appears from authentic Records, which are to be seen in the *Registry* of the See of *Canterbury*, and which *Popish* Priests have been admitted to see, peruse, and examine, without finding upon them any Marks of being other than genuine. The
Story

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Story was not suffer'd to take Air, and to be told abroad, till Forty Years after the thing is pretended to have been transacted, and known to themselves. And why was this, (can you imagine) but that it was hoped, there might be, by that Time, none alive, who could refute it, by testifying to the Truth of the Archbishop's Consecration in *Lambeth Chapel*; tho' by good Providence, the old Earl of *Nottingham*, who was present at the *Lambeth Consecration*, was then living, and did bear his Testimony to the Truth of it. Twenty things more have been said by our learned Writers, and by some, too, of the *Papists* themselves, to shew the Improbability, and even the Impossibility, of this idle Tale. Yet, in general, they persist in it, and are continually (such is their Conscience and Assurance!) throwing it in the Teeth of such *Protestants* of our Church, as (they fancy) know not which Way to contradict, and refute it. But this is no Wonder. For even their gravest and most dignified Writers, such as Cardinal *Bellarmino*, and *Baronius*, are observ'd to have a strange Assurance of this sort, not caring what they say, nor whereof they affirm, if the Shame of their Church may be cover'd, and its Cause any way advanc'd, or if the Reformed Churches may be blackened and disgraced thereby. When such topping Writers, Writers of their Rank, make no Difficulty of publishing to the whole World, the falsest Assertions, and most notorious Untruths, to serve the Interests of their Church, we shall not need to be surprized, if those little Men, the Men of the Mission, in their private Conversations and under-hand Dealings with unlearned *Protestants*, who cannot

not easily discover their Impostures, are somewhat less scrupulous about the Truth or Falsehood of their Affirmations, and make no Conscience of still persisting to amuse our People with this Story, after the Falsity of it has been made to appear as clearly, as the Sun ever shines at Noon-Day.

But allowing (say they) this Story to be a Fiction, and that *Parker* was really consecrated in *Lambeth* Chapel, there still lies a just Exception to his Consecrators, as not being duly consecrated themselves. But surely they were. For they were consecrated in the Days of *Hen. VIII.* according to the Order of the *Roman Pontifical*. Was not *Hodskins*, in particular, the Suffragan of *Bedford*, so consecrated? If he was not, how came he to be admitted to consecrate *Thirlby*, who, by the way, was one of the Ordainers of Cardinal *Pool* himself? If he had Power to consecrate *Thirlby*, the *Papish* Bishop, pray, why not *Parker*, the *Protestant* Archbishop?

No, perhaps they will answer, when he and the rest consecrated *Parker*, they were fallen into *Heresy*; and *heretical* Ordinations are all void. But this Principle is false; and (which is more) is held to be so, in their own Church; and tis only to serve the present Turn, that they use it, on this Occasion. For tho' they esteem the *Greek* Church to be heretical, as well as ours, they, nevertheless, admit their Ordinations, and re-ordain none of *their* Priests who come over to them. However, if it be so, that *heretical* Ordinations are null and void, let the Church of *Rome* see to it. For besides that some of their antient *Popes*, as well as *Prelates*, have been *Hereticks*, and ordained by *Hereticks*, and no body can tell

tell how far the supposed Defect in their Ordinations has been extended, and spread itself; besides this (I say) the Church itself is *heretical*, and has been so for some Ages past. For if the twelve Articles which Pope *Pius* has added to the Apostles Creed, and bound fast upon the Church of *Rome*, be all false, as our Writers, many a time have proved them to be, they may well be accounted so many Heresies. And the Consequence of that (supposing this Principle to be true) will be, that the Succession of their Pastors, and the Legitimacy of their Priesthood, has been at an end, long since.

What is said of the *Heresy*, may be said of the *Schism* they suppose his Consecrators to be in. If they were in *Schism*, it would not invalidate their Ordinations; nor can the Church of *Rome* pretend it does, without invalidating her own; it being notorious, that there have been in that Church divers *Schisms*, with Popes at the Head of them, and also certain, that the Schism, subsisting at present between them and us, is not to be charg'd to *our*, but to *their* Account.

There is yet another thing they hang much upon, viz. a *Defect* in our Forms of Ordination. For they would have you believe, that the Office of Priesthood cannot be convey'd by other Words than are particularly expressive of a Power to *consecrate the Body and Blood of Christ, to offer Sacrifice to God, and to celebrate Mass* (as it is in the *Pontifical*) *for the Living and the Dead*. Now if it really was, as it is not, any Part of the Office of the Priesthood, *to celebrate Mass for the Living and the Dead*, there would be no need that such Power and Authority should

be

be particularly mentioned; but if any Person (as with us) shall be solemnly presented, and solemnly admitted to the Order of Priesthood, with Prayer and Imposition of Hands, and in the Form of Words, *Receive the Holy Ghost, &c.* in which Christ ordained his Apostles, it will be sufficient, and the Power to *celebrate Mass for the Living and the Dead*, (if that was any Part of the Priest's Office) and to do every thing besides that is properly a Part and Function of it, must be esteemed, in Reason and common Sense, effectually conveyed to him. And if it be not so, then I doubt it will be found, there are some Parts and Offices of the Priesthood, which the Priests of the Church of *Rome* are not impower'd to perform, (who therefore, in their way of thinking, can be no Priests) particularly, Preaching the Word of God, offering up the Prayers of the People to him, and making Intercession for them, as also Blessing them *authoritatively* in his Name. For these (I guess) are not particularly mention'd in that Form of Words in the *Roman Pontifical*, whereby the Order of Priesthood is supposed to be conveyed.

But after all, tho' it may be at *Rome* thought proper, in point of Policy, to disallow the Orders of our Church, and to re-ordain such of our Apostate Priests as go over to them, and to instruct their Missionaries here to talk accordingly to our People, I am thoroughly persuaded, that those among them who are learned and ingenuous, and have ever given themselves the Trouble to look into, and examine, these Matters, do, in their Consciences, acknowledge the Validity of our Ordinations. We know many that do, particularly, *Cudsemin, Sancta Clara, F.*

Walsh.

Walsh. And the late Bishop of *Meaux*, whose Authority, methinks, should be of great Weight, not only as he was a Man of great *Genius* and Erudition, but of a flaming Zeal to make Converts, has delivered his Sense plainly enough to the same purpose. "The *English* (says he) maintain, that, at the Time "of *Cromwell*, there was no Interruption in their "Ordination. And as to the Succession at the Beginning of the Schism (*as he is pleased to call it*) "they advance, that there is not the least Difficulty; "and herein they seem to be in the right." See the Preface to *F. Le Courayer's* Defence of the Validity of the *English* Ordinations, p. 5.

The learned Father now mention'd, tho' a Roman Catholic, has excellently well defended our Ordinations, in three Volumes. And from some Places of that valuable Work, it plainly appears, there were a great many *Roman Catholics* in the same Sentiments with himself. In one place (*Pref. p. 4.*) he observes that "a great many of their Divines do maintain, that the Church of *England* is without a *Succession*, without a *Hierarchy*, without a *Ministry*," and elsewhere, I think, he speaks of these, as the *major* Part. But this very way of speaking plainly shews, there are a great many, a very considerable Part, of their Divines, of a different Judgment from the Majority. And as to the Judgment of the Majority, he always imputes it to their Ignorance of the true State of the Question, to their Prejudices, and to a certain Zeal they have to render odious the Persons and Conduct of our reform'd Bishops. And for my own Part, I am apt to believe, there is as much of *Policy*, as there is of *Zeal*, or *Prejudice* in

in it, and that they carefully keep up, among the Members of their Church, the Opinion of the Invalidity of our Orders, to prevent their entertaining any Thought of revolting to us ; as, in all Probability, they foresee many of them would do, if they were once satisfied concerning that Point.

It is further observable, that those Divines who have writ against our Ordinations, do not themselves seem to think they have fully proved, and made good the *Insufficiency*, and *Invalidity* of them ; but only that they have said so much, as may raise a *Doubt* or *Scruple* concerning them. But what are *Scruples*, how unreasonable, and how little to be minded, when they are not built upon certain *Facts*, and solid *Principles*. And nothing, sure, can be more uncertain than the *Facts*, and less solid than the *Principles* this *Scruple* is built upon. 'Tis a wonder to me, that those Divines who are so apt to raise *Scruples*, where there need be none, concerning our Ordinations, are so little liable to *Scruples* concerning their own, for which I am sure they have more Reason. For if it be true, as both the *Florentine* and *Trent-Council* have determined, that the Intention of the Minister is necessary to the Validity of the Sacraments, how can *they* be *assured* that *they* are really Priests or Bishops, as they bear themselves out to be, or indeed, that there are any Priests or Bishops at all, in their Church. For they cannot be sure, that their Ordainers and Consecrators did really intend to make them such, whatever Shew they might make of doing so. The most they can say or think of themselves is only this, that 'tis *probable*, they are true Priests, and true Bishops, because it is *probable*,

that those, or most of those, who consecrated or ordained them, would not intend otherwise, than the Church intended, by that Performance. But then, on the other hand, considering the Malice and Corruption of Men, and that some Popes, as well as Priests, have been found *Atheists, Jews, or Magicians*, 'tis more than probable that some would, and did; and nobody can tell which of them did, and which did not. Thus you see, they can never be sure (according to *their* Principles) that they are real Priests, or Bishops. Nay, I go further; they cannot be sure they are so much as Christians, because they cannot be sure, that the Reverend Priest or Bishop, or the gossiping Nurse or Midwife, by whom the baptismal Action was performed, were not so evil-minded, and wantonly wicked, as to intend it should not be a true Christian Baptism, and have no Effect [a]. Let those consider this,

[a] It may be worth while to set down here the terrible Consequences which the Doctrine of the *Necessity of the Ministers Intention to the Validity of the Sacraments* must be attended with, and the incurable Scepticism which all who hold it to be true must be involved in by it, as they were represented by *Catharinus*, the Bishop of *Minori*, in the Council of *Trent*. He desired the Fathers to consider, "how great an Affliction it would be to a tender Parent, when his Child should lie at the Point of Death, if he had in his Mind any Doubt concerning the Intention of the Priest by whom he was baptized, and how many anxious Thoughts a *Catechumen*, presenting himself to Baptism, must have within himself, were he to entertain any Doubt, whether the Priest, who was to baptise him, was not a false and counterfeit Christian, and did not mean, instead of baptising him, to wash him only in Jest and Sport, and that the same Thing might justly be feared in Confession and receiving the Eucharist." And in Answer to the Suggestion, that these Cases were very rare, "would to God (says he) they were so indeed, and that, in this corrupt and degenerate Age, there were not too much Reason to suspect they were very frequent. But supposing them rare, (continues he) nay, that there were but one

who so confidently talk to us of the Uncertainty of our Ordinations.

S E C T. V.

That the Protestant Religion discountenances Chastity, is a false and groundless Suggestion.

IT must be confessed that *Celibacy*, or at least *Vows of perpetual Celibacy*, the Protestant Religion does discountenance. Nay, it pronounces them absolutely unlawful. But *Celibacy* is one thing, and *Chastity* another. A Vow of perpetual *Celibacy* and *Virginity* can't be so warrantably undertaken, as the other Vows, which the *Monastic State* in the Church

only, might not a knavish Priest administer Baptism to a Child, who, when grown up, should be made a Bishop, and set over a great City, and living many Years in that Charge, might have the ordaining of the greatest Part of the Priests thereof. Now he, not being baptised, was not ordained, neither, consequently, were they ordained, who were promoted by him. So that by this Means, there would be, in this great and populous City, neither the Sacrament of Confession, nor of the Eucharist. For these cannot be without the true Sacrament of Orders, nor the Sacrament of Orders without a true Bishop, nor a Bishop truly and duely ordained, without Baptism. Behold, here, Millions of Nullities of Sacraments, and all occasioned by the Wickedness and Malice of one Minister, and by one Act of his only." The Reader may see in the second Book of *F. Paul's History of the Council of Trent*, a good deal more urged by that Bishop against the Opinion, that *without the inward Intention of the Minister there could be no Sacrament*; which, however, had no Effect upon the Fathers of the Council. They had no Relish for his Doctrine; and tho' they were not able to remove the Inconveniences and Mischiefs which he had charged upon the common Notion, nor resolve the Difficulties it was entangled with, they went on to establish and define it, and pronounced an *Anathema* against all who should be so bold as to contradict it. *If any one say, that at least, the Intention of doing that which the Church doth is not requisite in the Ministers, while they administer the Sacraments, let them be an Anathema.* Sess. 7. de Sacrament. in genere Can. II.

of Rome requires, the Vows of *Poverty*, and *Obedience*. For suppose a Person has it in his Power to refrain from Marriage, as much as he has to obey his Superiors, or to reject the Property of any temporal Estate, that falls, or is offered to him, yet 'tis plain he has it not in his Power to extinguish Burning and Concupiscence. And if he has not, then the Part he should take, (according to the Apostle's Determination 1 *Cor.* vii. 9.) is, not to entangle himself with such Vows, but to marry. If indeed Vows of perpetual Virginity would make Man or Woman chaste and pure, it would be another Case. But Vows, alas, whatever Pomp and Magnificence they are made with, will not much alter (little more, I fear, than St. *Francis's* Cord) the natural Constitution and Complexion, nor destroy the Propensions which God, for wise Reasons, has planted in us. And tho' these Votaries should, to their Vows, add Prayers, imploring of God that Grace which is so necessary for them, (which it is to be feared too many of them never think to do) we cannot be certain he will hear them. For having rejected the Remedy against Sin which he has provided, and given them in Charge to make use of, and presumptuously plunged themselves into a State, which they cannot, of themselves, abide in, with Purity and Peace, they are no more entitled to his Care and Support, than our Lord, I conceive, would have been, if, complying with the Suggestion of the Devil, he had thrown himself down from the Pinnacle of the Temple, in Dependence upon God, that *his Angels would bear him up in their Hands, that he hurt not his Foot against a*

Stone. If indeed a Man were to be cast into a desert Island, and of Necessity obliged to spend his Life there, as some have been, in perfect Solitude, without the least Commerce with any living Creature, besides the Beasts of the Field, or the *Fowls flying above the Earth, in the open Firmament of Heaven*, it might be, I think, reasonably presumed, that God would grant his Request, and give him the Gift he should earnestly pray for. Nay, I would hope the same in Behalf of those, who for Family-conveniency, to aggrandize their elder Brother are, against their Wills, cruelly shut up; and buried in Monasteries, by their Parents. But not so, when a Man, for some secular Ends, suppose of Avarice or Ambition, or when a young Girl, for the sake of a Life void of all worldly Care, and reputed honourable besides, or through Pride and Vanity, or some little childish Reason, because (for Instance) she has a near Relation, or a dear intimate she Friend already in the Monastery, or because the Nun's Habit, she is told, mightily becomes her, and makes her look handsomer, than she does in her secular Dress, or because she is conscious she has not a Talent for the World, and is not qualified to shine, and make such a Figure in it as she willingly would; when (I say) for such Reasons as these, they shall, of their own accords, take upon themselves that State, God is tempted and displeased, and they have no Right to expect from him to be endowed with the Gift of Continency, tho' they should earnestly desire, and pray for it. And, in fact, 'tis certain, it is not *universally*, nor, I fear, *generally* vouchsafed to those in the

Church of *Rome*, who by Vow, or the Law of the Church, have unalterably engaged themselves in that State. On the contrary, they seem to have given, by their Disorders, more Scandal, than the like Number of unmarried Persons, of the same Rank and Education, have, or than they themselves would have given, in any other State of Life. Many of the Popes themselves have been infamous for their Lust: The World rings with the amorous Intreagues, Escapes, and Adventures of the Nuns, and with the Gallantries, or Debaucheries of the Priests and Monks. In every Age pious Men of their own Communion have grievously complained of their Enormities of this Sort, which, before the Times of *Æneas Sylvius*, (who was afterwards Pope, by the Name of *Pius II.*) were grown to such a Height, that he declared it, as his Opinion, that, *tho' there were some Reasons for inhibiting Priests Marriage, there were much stronger for allowing it.* And he seems to have been, after he was Pope, in the same Sentiment.

Hence you may see, how little Reason those of the Church of *Rome* have to disparage and reproach the *Protestant* Religion, as discountenancing Chastity, because, forsooth, it discountenances the Law or Tyranny of the *Celibate*, which they impose not only upon the *Religious* (for so, belike, *Monks* and *Nuns* must be called) but also upon the *secular* Clergy of their Communion. And we are willing to leave it to all impartial Men, who are not Strangers to the general Sense and Doctrine of the two Churches, to judge and decide, which of them teaches best, and most countenances true Chastity, and

and discountenances, most, Lasciviousness and Uncleaness; whether the *Protestant* Churches, which uniformly and constantly teach, that Virginity and Marriage are both honourable, the former, when it is voluntary, when taken up and resolved upon for greater Growth in Grace and Goodness, in Conjunction with Humility, and accompanied with true Purity both of Flesh and Spirit, and the latter, when the *Bed* is kept *undefiled*; or whether the Church of *Rome*, which extols Virginity, or single Life, to the depretiating of Marriage, as a Sort of unholy Thing, a Pollution, which those who minister at the Altar must flee from and avoid, more than the Embraces of a Harlot. For this, in reality, is the Decision of many of their *Casuits*: And no less a Man than Cardinal *Campegius*, the Pope's *Legate* in *Germany* (when the Cause of certain Priests, who had married, was brought before him, and the scandalous Debaucheries of other Priests were pleaded in Mitigation of their Crime) was not ashamed openly to declare, "*he thought it a greater Sin for a Priest to commit Matrimony, than Fornication; nay, a greater than to keep a Number of Whores in his House.*" I say nothing of the elaborate *Disquisitions* of some of their *Casuits*, and particularly, those profligate *Casuits*, the *Jesuits*, concerning the Commerce between the two Sexes, and the Mysteries thereof. For a bare Detail of the several Cases they put, and their licentious Determinations thereupon, would too much defile these Papers, and make your Hairs stand an End.

S E C T. VI.

That the Protestant Religion makes no Account of the Mortification of the Flesh, shewn to be a false Suggestion, and Misrepresentation of it.

W H E N Protestants are represented as discountenancing Chastity, no wonder if they are also represented, as no great Friends to the chastening of the Flesh. But a few Words will be sufficient to shew, that this, as well as the other, is a calumnious Misrepresentation of them.

It is very true, indeed, they do make but little Account of *that Sort* of Castigation and Mortification of the Flesh, which the Church of *Rome* lays such a mighty Stress upon, particularly, in the Business of Fasting. They esteem it a small Matter merely to abstain from all Flesh Meats, while they allow themselves the best Eating, of all other Kinds, indulging in Fish [b], and other the richest Delicacies that can be invented and prepared by the Pastry-cook and Confectioner, and, withal, *drink Wine to Excess*, by which (it seems) the Fast, in the Account of that Church, is not broken. We are apt to think, that a spare and moderate Meal of dried Flesh, or of ordinary Cheese, is not near so pampering to the Body, nor so great an Incentive, as Fish is, especially some Sorts of it, and when richly dressed besides. Nor are we satisfied

[b] Dr. *Arbutnot* affirms, " that a Diet of Fish is more rich and alkalescent, than that of Flesh, and therefore very improper for such as practise Mortification. And accordingly, that the Inhabitants of Sea Ports are generally (he observes) prolific." *Essay concerning the Nature of Aliments*, p 79.

with the Reason that is given for the free and plentiful use of Wine, during the Fast, *viz.* its being good for Digestion. For allowing it to be good for Digestion, after eating Fish to Repletion, is it good for Digestion only? Is not the body nourished, the Blood enriched, and the inordinate Appetites of the Flesh enflamed by it? But as for Drinking to Excess (which those *Roman Catholics* who do at any Time allow themselves in it, scruple not, I suppose, to do, at Times of Abstinence or Fasting, more than at other Times) it is not only a scandalous Indecency, but an absurd Thing, as being utterly inconsistent with, and absolutely defeating all the religious Ends for which Fasting is appointed and ordained.

The religious Ends and Purposes for which it is ordained, according to the Scriptures, and the Sense of our Church, to which that of other *Protestant* Churches is, I suppose, conformable, are these; *first*, testifying to God and the World the deep Sense we have of our Unworthiness of the least of God's Mercies, by Reason of our Sins; *secondly*, heightening our Devotion, and *lastly*, keeping under the inordinate Affections and Inclinations of the Flesh. For these Ends, the Church, in her Homilies, teaches and recommends this Duty, and, 'tis well known, has appointed proper Seasons for the Exercise of it. But the Fasting she recommends is, not scrupulously refraining from all Flesh Meat, and whatever else has any Relation to, or proceeds from it, while we indulge ourselves in all other Dainties; but refraining from all Food, if the Fast we propose be no longer than Nature will

will bear to be defrauded of it, or a spare and coarse Diet, if it be required, or thought proper, to extend our Fast to a greater Length. For that Distinction of Meats, which the Church of *Rome* makes Fasting to consist in, we look upon with the same Eye we do upon that Distinction of Dress and Garb, which is affected by our *Quakers*, and think it as ridiculous, in *Roman Catholics*, to eat, upon Fasting Days, no Flesh, or any Thing that has touched it, while they eat freely of other Things that are equally, if not more, nourishing and dainty; as it is in the *Quakers*, not to touch Lace, while they affect to wear the finest of Cambricks, and the best of other Things they can readily procure, even beyond what others, of the same Rank and Condition in Life, do commonly content themselves with.

And now let any one say, if the Duty of Fasting, and thereby mortifying the Body, is not more truly and sincerely taught by the Church of *England*, and other reformed Churches, than by the Church of *Rome*. Would to God it were as well practised, as it is taught, amongst us. But there we are faulty. And tho' there are yet some of us who do duly practise it, 'tis fallen (the more is the Pity) into too much Neglect and Disuse among us; which, I take it, is owing, in a good Measure, to the pitiful and ridiculous Superstitions which they see it practised with, in the Church of *Rome*; the Contempt they have for these superstitious Fopperies, attending the Duty, making them entertain (which is but too natural an Effect upon weak, or undistinguishing Heads) an Opinion of
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the Insignificancy of the Duty itself. And yet I am of Opinion, that even the Thing, which in that Church is called Fasting, is not so generally practised in it, as they would make *Protestants* believe. The *Priests* and *Monks* (they say) lay upon the Shoulders of the Seculars much heavier Burthens, in the Matter of fasting, as well as in other Things, than they themselves care to take up. And the *Seculars* have many ingenious Thoughts, and pretty Ways, to avoid it. By the Rules of their Church, the Aged and Decrepid, young Children, Women breeding, and with Child, the miserable Poor, and those who exercise very laborious Trades, which require the Exertion of all their Strength, Preachers, Confessors, those who attend and minister to the Sick, and, in fine, all who cannot fast, and, at the same Time, perform the several Duties and Offices of Piety that are incumbent upon them, the Sick, and the Sickly, and all who pretend and affect to be, and, when the Fasts of the Church are approaching, can make their Physicians believe they really are sickly, all who are subject, at certain Times, to some little Disorders and Indispositions, and take Care to make the most of them, all these easily may [c], and, I presume, do commonly get to be excused. So that, one Way or other, this Precept of the Church is far enough from being generally observed. And the Result of all is, that as our Church teaches the Duty of religious Fasting in a truer and honest Manner than the Church of *Rome*, so the

[c] Vid. *Bellarmin.* De bonis operibus, L. ii. c. 10.

Church of *Rome* has not much Reason, or not so much, however, as is commonly imagined, to magnify themselves above our Church, for the more general Practice of the Duty, even in their own idle and nonsensical Way of practising it.

But, besides Fasting, they have found out other Ways of chastening the Body, upon account of which they exalt themselves against us, as having little or nothing of them, in our Churches—wearing coarse Garments, uneasy to the Flesh—using long Watchings—and frequent whipping of themselves. We must not suppose these are the general Practices of *Roman Catholics*. No, they are but few that enter into them, tho' it must be own'd, 'tis not for want of Encouragement from the Church. For as she has Maxims, Doctrines, and Practices, suited to the Tempers of the Gay, the Frolic, and Debonair; so she has others, suited to melancholy and gloomy Souls, by which means she gains and keeps all within her Communion, and none have Occasion or Temptation to seek out, or to set up for themselves, another Religion, better adapted to their particular Humours and Inclinations. We don't deny but bodily Austerities, when used with Prudence and Moderation, may be useful to subdue the rebellious Motions of the Flesh, and to some other religious Purposes. But to exercise over our Bodies such a Tyranny as Nature is unable to endure, destroys the Health, and renders us unfit both for the Service of God, and the Practice of many relative and social Duties, is not required of us, so far from it, that 'tis rather unlawful. Can it be believed that God is pleased with

with any ones whipping and lashing himself so cruelly, as some in that Church do? Is there any Religion in it? Or can it be esteemed, by any rational Man, a just Recommendation of the Religion by which it is prescribed or encouraged? If so, the Priests of *Baal* had a very good Religion. For, in sacrificing *they cut themselves with Knives, and Lances, till the Blood gushed out upon them,* 1 Kings xviii. 28. And those who sacrificed their Sons and their Daughters, offering them up, like *Bullocks*, upon the Altar, must have a yet better. For my own part, when I consider the barbarous Scourgings and Flagellations, which some deluded and superstitious Men so freely bestow upon themselves, I cannot but have an utter Detestation of that Church which encourages such Things, as meritorious, And when, again, I consider the *farcical* Flagellations, which others, (to grace some of their solemn Processions) are secretly hired with Money to practise upon themselves, and which they could not endure without drinking themselves up to a good Pitch, before they set out processioning, I cannot help entertaining a perfect Scorn and Contempt of it.

S E C T. VII.

That the Protestant Religion does not make needless, or discourage good Works.

I Apprehend, there are two Things which give those of the *Roman* Communion a Handle for saying, that good Works are represented as needless, or however, greatly disparaged and discouraged, by the *Protestant* Religion. One is, that good Works

Works are not *meritorious*, as the Church of *Rome* holds them to be. The other, the Doctrine (which also is a *Protestant* Doctrine), that we are justified by Faith only. But neither of these Doctrines, when rightly explained and understood, will serve to build such a Charge and Imputation upon.

The *Popish* Doctrine concerning good Works is this, that Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving, and other Works of the like Nature, have in them that Worth and Dignity, that they truly and properly merit, or deserve the Reward of Heaven, and can challenge it, upon the Foot of *strict Justice*, as due to them. This we account a proud Error, and think all our good Works, and all the Services we can render to God, not being performed through our own Strength, but only through that Strength and Grace which he has given us, can merit nothing at his Hands; and besides, that they are so imperfect in themselves, as well as debased with a Mixture of so much Evil, that there is no Manner of Proportion between *them*, and that glorious, as well as eternal Reward which God has promised to those who sincerely perform them, but that their Acceptance, to our Salvation, is entirely owing to the Merits of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. I need not surely go about to prove from Scripture that our Doctrine is true. For, notwithstanding the Determination of the Council of *Trent*, it is certainly the secret Sense of great Numbers in the Communion of the Church of *Rome* itself, as many of their greatest Churchmen have plainly discovered at the Hour of Death, when they have freely own'd, and without Disguise, that they place not their Hope and Confidence

fidence in God upon any thing they have done, but only upon the inestimable Merits of his Son *Jesus Christ*, their Redeemer, All I shall need to observe is, that this Doctrine does no way disparage good Works. It only forbids us to *think of them more highly than we ought to think*; which surely is not to *disparage* them. Nor is the practice of them *discouraged* by it. For though we press them not, as *meritorious* of Heaven, yet we do press them as much as they, as *indispensible Conditions*, without which it cannot be obtained.

Nor does the Protestant Doctrine of *Justification by Faith only*, when rightly understood, render good Works *unnecessary*, or in the least *discourage* the Practice of them. For though there may be, perhaps, among *Protestants*, a handful of Men, who expound this Doctrine in such a Manner, as really puts a flight upon good Works, such as the *Solifidians* or *Antinomians* formerly among us; that's nothing to the Church of *England*, or other Protestant Churches, who universally disclaim their Errors, and teach the Doctrine of *Justification by Faith*, so as the Necessity of good Works, in order to Salvation, is not at all prejudiced thereby. For though we say, that *Faith alone justifies*, we don't say, that *the Faith that is alone*, or destitute of good Works, *justifies* any one in God's Sight. Faith is the Thing which causes the Act of Justification, or makes just: but then, good Works (we hold) are inseparable Attendants on that Faith, and necessarily produced by it; and if they do not attend it, and are not produced by it, it is not the Faith that justifies.—By this, you may
plainly

plainly see, how the *Protestant* Religion and Church of *England* are abused, when it is suggested, that they set aside the Necessity of, or that they *discourage* and *discountenance* good Works.

CHAPTER II.

Wherein the Prejudices urged and inculcated in Favour of the Church of Rome are considered, and shewn to be groundless.

SECT. I.

Of the pretended Unity of that Church, and that it is not such as can reasonably incline any Protestant to embrace the Communion of it.

THE divided State of *Protestants* was considered in the first Section of the first Chapter. And there, I hope, it was made to appear, that the Divisions subsisting amongst *them* can be no reasonable Motive to any *Protestant* to forsake the *Protestant* Religion. But the Unity that is pretended to be in the *Roman* Church is a Consideration something different; and I shall now shew, it is no just and rational Motive to go over to, and embrace the Communion of that Church.

First, I must observe that the *Unity* of *Roman Catholics* is nothing like what they would have it be thought to be. If you look back upon the Times that are past, you will find there have been as many *Schisms* in that Church, as in any Church whatsoever, Thirty, or well nigh that Number, according to some of their own Authors, with Popes
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at the Head of them, and one of them of no less than seventy Years Continuance, some Part of the Church holding with the Pope sitting at *Rome*, the other Part submitting themselves to him at *Avignon*. You will find Popes damning their Predecessors, annulling their Acts, and declaring void all their Ordinations, Councils also clashing with Councils, one hereticating and anathematizing the Doctrines which had been defined by another. Or if you consider the State of that Church as it is at present, how different in their religious, or Church Principles is one Part of it from another! How little Likeness between a *Roman* and a *French* Papist! How divided are the several Nations, Members or Branches of that Church, and the several Orders in it, and that too about Points of the last Consequence, (as they account them) the very Sum and Substance of the Christian Religion, I mean the *Supremacy* and *Infallibility* of the Pope. Your *Roman* and *Italian* Papists, who are most under the Pope's Eye, and have, therefore, the largest Expectations from him, and are most concerned to please him, will have him superior to a Council, while many others in all Parts of the World (with the Council of *Constance*) hold a Council superior to Him. The former, again, maintain, that *Infallibility* resides personally in his *Holiness*, and that he cannot err even in *Matters of Fact*, and much less in *Articles of Faith*. But others will not hear of this Doctrine, and hold it an Arch-heresy, placing the *Infallibility* either in a Council without the Pope, or with him, or else in the Church (meaning, I suppose, the Pastors of the Church diffusive. What

warm Disputes, in that Church, between the *Scottists* and *Thomists*, about gratuitous Predestination, and efficacious Grace, as also between the *Franciscans* and *Dominicans*, about the great Point, whether the *Virgin Mary* was conceived in original Sin, or not; each Party pretending to Miracles and Revelations, in Favour of their respective Sentiments. What Disturbances did *Jansenism* not long ago make in *France*! How many Followers and Adherents had *Molinos* upon the Subject of *Quietism* in *Italy*, and even in *Rome* itself! And how are they divided about the deposing Doctrine, or the Power of the Pope to dethrone Kings, in case of Heresy, and to give their Kingdoms to another; one partly holding this (as we do, and as it certainly is) for a *damnable Doctrine and Position*, while the other deems it an Article of Faith. This is the Unity which *Roman Catholics* brag so much of, in their Church, some of them, 'tis likely, not knowing, themselves, what is the State of it, while others presume they shall find such *Protestants*, as they chuse to deal with, ignorant thereof. God be praised, we have no such Unity as this, in the Church of *England*, nor are our Bishops, Priests, or People thus at Daggers about any Point which they esteem, or can be esteemed by others, of great Importance. And if any one of us does ever go about to dispute and contest any such Point, or to advance Notions that may be thought to be, or really are, subversive of the true Faith, and meets with an Antagonist to defend it, the Contest is generally personal, and in a Year or two nothing more is spoken of it.

If it should be pretended that by the Unity, upon account of which the Church of *Rome* is so recommendable, they don't mean a Freedom from all Controversies and Disputes within the Pale of the Church, but an Agreement in external Communion with it, you may properly reply—We have the same Unity in the Church of *England*, and so indeed have all other Churches whatsoever. For all who profess themselves Members of our Church, or of any other, do live in external Communion with it, as much as the Members of the Church of *Rome* live in external Communion with *That* Church. And should it be farther alledged, that many have broke away from our Communion, and form'd themselves into separate Communions, in Opposition to it, you may again reply—That the same Misfortune, or a greater, has also attended the Church of *Rome*, all the *Protestants* in the World having broken away, and divided themselves from *That* Church. And I am perfectly satisfied many more would do the same at this Day, if they were not kept in it by Ignorance and Force. Let them give their People the Use of the Scriptures: Let *Protestant* Books be imported to, or printed in *Roman Catholic* Countries, with the same Freedom that *Popish* ones are imported, or printed here: Let them abolish the dreadful Tribunal of the Inquisition: Let them knock off the Chains of their Bishops, releasing them from that ignominious Vassalage in which they are now holden to the Pope, and restoring them to their primitive Authority, and Independency; and you will soon see whole Provinces and Kingdoms revolting from him, and reforming themselves after

the Pattern of the Church of *England*, or something very near it.

But, after all, there at this Time not fewer Religions, or (if we will speak properly) not fewer *Ways of Religion*, within the Pale and Communion of *That Church*, than there are amongst Protestants in this Kingdom. A *Roman* and a true *Gallican* Papist are as much of two Religions, as we and the *Presbyterians*: A *Franciscan* and a *Dominican* are as much of two, as a *Presbyterian* and an *Independent*: Nor, perhaps, are we of the Church of *England*, and the very *Quakers* more removed, and at a greater Distance, than the *Jesuits* and *Quietists* are, from one another. In the ordinary Language of that Church, the several Orders of Monks and Nuns are call'd *Religions*; and I think not improperly. For they are not only distinct Bodies, founded by different Persons, known by their different Habits, and generally at irreconcilable Enmity with one another, but have different Rules, some of which (they tell you) were received by Inspiration of the *Holy Ghost*. And if you peruse their several Rules, you will find more difference in the Practices they are to walk by, and little less in the Principles and Opinions they are obliged severally to profess, than you will, in most of the Sects and Denominations amongst *Protestants*. The Thing that makes them appear as if they were all of one Way of Religion, is their being in Subjection to one Head. But does this really make them of one Religion? No more than it would make the several Denominations of *Protestants*, here in *England*, to be of one, if they were all to agree
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to recognize the Authority of the Archbishop of *Canterbury*, and let him have the general Oversight and Direction of their several Societies or Churches, though not the least Alteration was to be made either in their Faith, or Discipline, or Worship, but he were to preserve and uphold them all, in the State wherein they now are.—From this short View of the State of Religion in the Church of *Rome*, you may plainly perceive how small Reason the *Papists* have to boast of their Unity, and to exalt themselves above the Reformed Churches, on that Account.

S E C T. II.

Shewing the Rashness and Falseness of that Assertion, that the Church of Rome is the Mother Church, and that Christianity has been every where planted by Missionaries sent from it, and that if it were true, it would be no good Reason for our turning to it.

IF it was really true that the Church of *Rome* is the Original and Mother Church, it might entitle that Church to some particular Privileges, and Prerogatives of Honour, and give it a Rank and Precedency amongst the Churches; but it would be no just and rational Motive to chuse the Communion of it, before that of any other. For as a Mother Church is as liable as another to fall into Errors and Corruptions of the most grievous Nature, so if it does actually fall into them, and thinks fit to impose them upon its Members, as necessary Terms of Communion with it, a *Christian* will be no more obliged to adhere to the Commu-

nion of *That* Church, than any other Church whatever. This I think is so evident, that I shall not need to insist upon it, especially, since it is so far from being true, that the *Roman* is the *Mother of all Churches*, as to be a gross and notorious Falstity. For every body knows the Church of *Jerusalem* is *the Mother of us all*, and *the Word of God* came out from thence to the Church of *Rome*, and to all other Churches, and to some of these, before *Rome* had been bless'd with the Sound of it.

It is also a Falstity almost as gross and notorious as the other, that *Christianity* has been every where planted by Means of *Missionaries* sent from that Church. For not to insist upon what was just now intimated, that there were *Christian* Churches before the Church of *Rome* had any Existence, and while that City and Country was entirely *Pagan*, what do we think of those noble Plantations of *Christianity* which were made by the *Apostles* themselves, in *Greece*, in the lesser *Asia*, in *Scythia*, in *Parthia*, in *Media*, in *Persia*, in *Ægypt*, in *Africk*, in *India*, in *Æthiopia*, perhaps also in *Britain*, and in divers other Parts of the World. 'Tis hoped, it will not be pretended, that all this was done by St. *Peter*, (whom they claim for the Head of their Church) or by the other *Apostles*, as *Missionaries* sent by *Him*. We read nothing of any such Mission in the *New Testament*, nor in the earliest Writers of the Church, but rather that, it was determined, either by Lot, or by common Consent and Agreement among themselves, what Part of the World each *Apostle* should have, as his particular Province, to propagate the Gospel in. And, indeed, we are so far

the Church of Rome removed.

far from finding St. *Peter* sending the other Apostles any whither, to preach the Gospel, or to confirm those who had received it, that we find *him* sent by *them* (a poor Proof of his Primacy!) on such an Errand. For when the Apostles, which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who when they were come down, pray'd for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Acts viii. 14, 15.

In some of the later Ages ('tis own'd) the Church of Rome did upon divers Occasions, apply itself more to the spreading and propagating of the Faith. And about the latter End of the sixth Century, *Austin*, a *Benedictine* Monk, at the Request of *Bertha*, Wife to *Ethelbert*, King of *Kent*, who was herself a *Christian*, was sent hither by *Gregory the Great*, for the Conversion of her Husband, and to plant the Gospel amongst the *English Saxons*. He did so; but it was not the Faith of the present *Roman* Church which he planted here. For neither He, nor *Gregory*, by whom he was sent, were any thing like the Popes and Monks of later Ages, but tolerable good *Protestants*, and little more than *Papists in Embryo*; however, far enough from being perfect Men, and grown up to a Maturity and Ripeness in the Faith, to the Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of it, as it now stands in the Creed of the *Roman* Church.

As to their Missions in *China*, in the *Indies*, or elsewhere, set on Foot in one or two of the last Ages, you will not think them, I fancy, any great Credit to their Church, or Recommendation of it.

if you look narrowly into them, and do but consider the following Things.

In the first Place, what Sort of *Christianity* they preach there. It is not my Meaning, here, to charge their *Missionaries* with preaching *Christianity*, as corruptly professed, and taught, in their own Church; tho' even *That* is no small Disparagement to their *Missions*, and detracts not a little from the Merit of them. But what I mean is, that they either conceal, or else alter, and disguise, the *common* Principles of Christianity, or mix them up with a Multitude of Falshoods, or most abominable *Heathenish* Corruptions, to make them more palatable, and go down the better; with those *Pagan* Nations, whom they apply themselves to. In this manner, the great *Jerome Xavier* preached *Christianity*, as we may judge by his *Persic* Gospel, where such a Heap of Lies are recorded, and blended with Truth, in so shameful a Manner, as would shake, if there were nothing else, and even utterly destroy the Credit of all the Miracles that are pretended to have been wrought by him. With the same *Simplicity and godly Sincerity* the Gospel is preached in *Cbina*, by the honest *Jesuits*, where, it is well known, they have made such an *amicable Accommodation* of *Christianity* with the *Superstitions* and *Idolatries* of the Country, that one of the Popes himself could not bear it. Where Christianity is thus accommodated and suited to the Passions, the Prepossessions, and Corruptions of Men, it may well find a more easy Reception; and it would be no wonder if their Conversions and Baptisms were really as numerous, as they are sometimes given out

out to be; whilst the *Protestant Missionaries*, who preach Christianity to the *Heathen* in its native Simplicity, and cannot allow themselves to conceal, or disguise, any of its Truths, how many soever shall be offended, and turn their Backs on them, are forced to content themselves with gaining to *Christ*, here one, and there another, whom they shall find in a fit Disposition to receive his Gospel, according to the Strictness and Purity thereof.

It should be also considered, by what Means these Conversions have been commonly effected; sometimes, and in some Places, where they have no Power, and live precariously, it has been by Craft and Fraud, or making their Court to Princes; but, at other Times, and in other Places, where they have Power, by Force and Violence, and Terror. Thus the Recovery of the holy Land, and the Conversion of the Infidels who possessed it, was attempted, the Popes stirring up the Princes of *Europe* to put themselves in Arms, and go out against them. And thus too, a considerable Part of the *Peruvian America* was made *Christian* by the *Spaniards*. They murdered, without Scruple or Pity, in infinite Numbers [d], the antient Inhabitants of the Country, to get their Gold, and to give the Remnant, that was spared, the Christian Faith, in lieu of it.

[d] The *Spaniards*, in the Space of Forty Years, wherein they exercised their Tyranny in the *West-Indies*, are said to have put to Death above Twelve Millions of People, Men, Women, and Children.

And this puts me in Mind of another Thing, which will also deserve your Consideration, *viz.* upon what Motives, and with what Views, these Conversions have been generally attempted. You may be sure, the Love of *Christ*, and the saving of Souls from Death, are given out, as the real Motives and Inducements to these Undertakings; but it is too plain, that other Views and Motives, not altogether so Christian, have had a great Influence upon them. The Popes had other Ends, besides propagating the Faith, for soliciting *the holy War*, and summoning Christian Princes to go, under the Banner of the Cross, to regain the Ground where Christianity was first planted; as particularly, bringing the *Greek Church*, with their *Patriarchs*, into Subjection to themselves, getting rid of some Princes who grew troublesome, or stood in their Way, and encroaching upon all of them, in their Absence; to say nothing of getting Money, which they had many Ways to do, by these Expeditions. And some of these Ends, particularly, the Enlargement of their Empire, and by Consequence, the Encrease of their Revenues, have been plainly at the Bottom of most of their Missions for the Conversion of Heathens, for some past Ages. Some who go upon this Errand are plainly Merchant-Missionaries: Some go, because their Superiors, whom they are bound to obey, command them, tho' many, we'll suppose, do it, aiming sincerely at the Glory of God, without thinking of any Bye-ends, or temporal Advantages. But 'tis to be feared, that what chiefly animates the Zeal of the Church to the Prosecution of these Designs, is the
Enlarge-

Enlargement of its Empire. The enlarging the Empire of the Pope was not a Thing quite unthought of even at the Time when *Austin* was sent to *England*, as one may fairly collect from the Tug he had with the *British Christians*, to bring them to submit to his own Authority, and to acknowledge the Supremacy of the *Roman See*. But, in after Times, when the Bishops of *Rome* became more ambitious, and took it into their Heads to be called *universal Pastors*, we may suppose, that a View to extend their Jurisdiction must have a larger Share, and more powerful Influence, upon these Designs. And we, accordingly, find that the Church, in these later Ages, has taken more Pains to propagate the Faith, than it did in the primitive Times, when no such Authority was affected or dreamt of. And it is observable, that they send their Missionaries chiefly to those Countries, where their Authority and Jurisdiction, when received, are likely to turn to the best Account, to the warmer and richer *Southern Climes*, not to the bleak and frozen *North*, tho' in *these* poor and barren Quarters of the World, Souls are as precious in the Sight of God, as in the other.—Consider well these Things, before you applaud the Zeal and Forwardness of that Church to gain Souls to *Christ*, and entertain a Thought, upon *That* Motive, of going over to it.

Neither should we, while we are speaking of the Zeal of that Church to convert Infidels, forget to observe, how much their Conversion is hindered by some of the Doctrines and Practices thereof. What Merriment does the absurd Doctrine of
Transub-

Transubstantiation, and eating their God, afford to Infidels and Unbelievers! How are *Jews* and *Mahometans* scandalized by their idolatrous Processions, their Adoration of the Host, their Image-Worship! And what little Hope of their ever becoming *Christians*, so long as they are told that the *Roman Church* is the only Catholic Church of Christ, out of which there is no Salvation! These are insuperable Obstacles to their Conversion; and, perhaps, I should not be greatly mistaken, if I were to say, that, for one that has ever been brought to the Faith of Christ by all the Missionaries of that Church, there have been fifty, who, by its senseless Doctrines, and idolatrous Practices, have been alienated, and kept from embracing it.

S E C T. III.

Shewing, that the Pretence of the Roman Catholic being the old Religion is false and groundless, and therefore no Reason for embracing it.

IF, when they tell us, theirs is *the old Religion*, they mean nothing more (as truly they seem not to do) than that their Religion was received and professed in this, and other *Protestant* Countries, long before the *Protestant* (as it is now constituted and established here, and in those Countries respectively) was introduced and set up, if (I say) by theirs being *the old Religion*, they mean nothing but this, it will hardly be worth our while to dispute with them such a frivolous and insignificant Point. For what does it signify which of the two Religions was (for Example) first in *England*?

Will

Will it be ever the truer for having been first, *here*? If this way of Arguing will hold, *Paganism* has certainly the Right to be esteemed the true Religion; for that was *here*, before either of these, and indeed before *Christianity* itself, in any Form and Shape whatsoever. Then also, it will follow, that the *Roman Catholic* is, in some Countries, the true Religion, but not, in others; the true Religion, in those Countries where it happened to gain Priority of Possession, but not the true, in those, where the *Greek*, or *Protestant*, or any other Method of Religion, was *in*, before *it*; for Instance, in our *American* Plantations. And if, an Age or two hence, or even now, it should please God, in his unsearchable Wisdom, to suffer the *Popish* to root out the *Protestant* Religion, and to establish itself in those Countries, the *Protestants* there remaining (if any be suffered to remain) may with as much Reason, urge their Countrymen to return to the *Protestant*, as being *the old Religion*, as the *Missionaries*, or other *Papists* here, can call upon us, by telling us *theirs is the old Religion*, to return and reconcile ourselves to it. This Argument, you see, is good, *either* Way, and therefore good, *neither*; and proves nothing besides the Ignorance, or Insincerity of those *Roman Catholics* who use it, and the Weakness of those *Protestants* who are deceived, and led away by it.

However, if we were minded, and thought it a Point worth gaining, it would be easy to shew, that the same which is now called the *Protestant* Religion (the same in the main) was in Possession of these Kingdoms divers Ages before the present

Roman

Roman Catholic Religion entered into them, or was so much as heard of in the World. *Christianity* seems to have been planted here in the Apostles Times, and, perhaps, as soon as at *Rome* itself. And it is well known, the old *British Christians*, down as low as *Austin* the Monk's coming hither, had no Knowledge of the Pope, or at least of their Duty to be subject to him, but were subject to their own *Diocesan*, under one *Metropolitan*, the *Archbishop* of *Caerleon*, now *St. David's*. And when *Austin* demanded their Subjection to himself, and the Bishop of *Rome*, they resolutely refused it. And, as to the great Points of Faith and Doctrine, such as *Transubstantiation*, *Purgatory*, and others, now in Dispute between us, we hear of very few, if of any of them, in the *British*, or indeed in any other Churches, before that Time.—From this short View of the State of Religion, here in *Britain*, during the first Ages, you may plainly perceive, that *our* Religion was here, before *Popery*. I grant you, it was not then call'd the *Protestant* Religion. How could it? How could our *British* Ancestors be *PROTESTERS* against the Errors and Corruptions of *Popery*, before those Errors and Corruptions were hatched, and brought into the World? But, if their Religion was, in Substance, the same with that which is now called the *Protestant* Religion, that is, if they held and professed the common Faith of Christians, without the impure Mixtures of *Transubstantiation*, *Adoration of the Host*, *Image-Worship*, *Prayer in an unknown Tongue*, *Half-Communion*, *the Seven Sacraments*, *Purgatory with the praying of Souls out of it*, and the other distinguishing

guishing Points of *Pöpery*, then it may truly be said, that *Pöpery* is the *Novelty*. and the *Protestant* Religion the *old Religion* of this Nation.

This, however, (as I told you before) is too frivolous and insignificant a Point to be much contended for. The only *Antiquity* that will do real Credit to the *Romish*, or to any Religion, and recommend it to Persons of any Sense, is its Conformity to Scripture, and being practised in Scripture-Times. And if *Roman Catholics* can make it out, that their Religion is such, we will readily confess, it is *the old Religion*. For the Scriptures being the oldest Books of our Religion, nay, the original Charter of it, 'tis evident, that whatever Religion is most agreeable to *these*, must be the oldest. But that the *Romish* Religion is not, may be fairly presumed (without entering, at present, into an Examination of the particular Points) from hence—That *Roman Catholics* do always speak of the Scriptures very slightly,—That when *Protestants* appeal to *them* for the Proof and Trial of those Points that are controverted between us, they always decline it, whenever they handsomely can, as if conscious that the Scriptures were against them—That they set up Tradition, as a Rule of Faith, to supply the pretended Deficiencies of Scripture, as if sensible, that some of their Articles of Faith were not to be fetched from thence, and lastly, that some of their learned Writers have given up the Scriptures to the *Protestants*, laying the Stress of their Cause upon later Writers, the Fathers of the Church,

But

But the Fathers, those I mean that are truly primitive, are no less against them, than the Scriptures, as learned *Protestants*, and more particularly those of our Church, have sufficiently shewn, a hundred Times. And this you may guess to be true, by their taking such Care [in their *Indices expurgatorii*] to expunge or blot out of the Writings of the Fathers, and purge them of all such Passages, as speak too plainly in Favour of *Protestant* Doctrines, and Opinions. And we, accordingly, shew these Fathers not less, but indeed more Regard than they do themselves. But we are not able to bring ourselves to have the same Regard and Veneration for those, who lived in the later Ages, not only because those Ages were very ignorant, and miserably over-run with Superstition and Corruption, but merely because they were later, and had no better means than we now have, nor (if we would speak the Truth) near so good, of knowing, what the true and genuine Doctrine of Christianity is: Nor can we see any Reason why the Authority of those Monks, Priests, or Bishops of their Church, who lived eight, or nine hundred, or a thousand Years after Christ, should weigh more than the Authority of their Monks, Priests, or Bishops, now living. This Sort of Fathers we willingly resign to them: We readily confess they are on their Side, in some of the controverted Points, as much as the Scriptures, and the most antient of the Fathers are on ours: Which latter Assertion if you doubt of the Truth of, I will single out a few Particulars, for Examples, to convince you of it.

That

That corrupt and sacrilegious Practice of *Half-Communion*, or taking away the Cup from the Laity, as it is an open Affront to, and barefaced Defiance of our Saviour's Institution, which was in both Kinds, so it was a Thing unthought of in the primitive Church. *Cassander*, [e] a *Roman Catholic*, is of Opinion; it cannot be shewn, that the Eucharist was ever otherwise administered, than in both Kinds, till more than a thousand Years after *Christ*. And we learn from *Aquinas* [f], that the Cup was not every where, even in his Time, which was the 13th Century, wholly withdrawn from the Laity. This was done by the worshipful Council of *Constance*, in the following Century. The Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* was first broached about the End of the 8th, or the Beginning of the 9th Century, was asserted by some, and opposed by others, for several Hundreds of Years after, till in the *Lateran* Council, in the Year 1215, it was advanced into an Article of Faith. Image-Worship was brought in by the second Council of *Nice*, held in the Year 787. Purgatory, by the Confession of their own Writers, was a Region unknown in the primitive Church [g]. And, in

[e] Consult. de utraque specie Sacramenti.

[f] Sum. Pars 3 Q. xviii. Art. 12.

[g] The Doctrine of a Purgatory is indeed of much greater Antiquity (in the World, tho' not in the Christian Church) than I have assigned to it. 'Tis of earlier Date than Christianity itself, being an Article of the old *Pagan*, as it is now of the new *Roman* Creed. For as the Heathens held, that, in the Regions of *Pluto*, there were two separate Places, one called *Tartarus*, allotted for the Punishment of the Wicked, the other called *Elysium*, where the pious and happy Spirits are represented, as entertaining themselves in beautiful Fields, with the

particular *Fisher*, Bishop of *Rochester*, who had a Cardinal's Hat sent him by Pope *Clement VII.* (which Circumstance I mention that the unlearned Reader may not take him for a *Protestant*) expressly says, that, *in the primitive Church there was little, or no Mention of it.* *Gregory the Great* seems to have made the first Discovery, and to have given the Church a Hint of it, about the End of the 6th, or Beginning of the 7th Century. But it was some Centuries after, before it was a Matter of any Certainty, that this *Purgatory* was a Place in Hell, wherein the Souls of such, as should finally be saved, were, for a certain Time, tormented. And we have an Author of the 12th Century [b],

same Diversions and Amusements, which they delighted in, when alive, so they believed that the most perfect Souls, having contracted great Impurity by their Commerce with the Body, were obliged, before their Entrance into *Elysium*, to undergo some Punishment and Purgation, till the Pollution was taken away. *Virgil* has a Passage in the sixth *Æneid*, wherein he speaks of this Purgation in the infernal Regions, which I shall give you in the Translation of *Dr. Trapp*.

Nor, ev'n when Life is fled, do all their Ills,
And all their Pests corporeal wear away;
But many Stains, in such a Length of Time
Contracted, marvellously must inhere.
Therefore with Punishment they are explor'd,
And pay due Penance for their former Crimes.
Some hang expanded to the empty Winds;
The Guilt ingrain'd of others in th' Abyss
Of Seas is wash'd; or burnt away with Fire.

The last Sentence, *or burnt away with Fire*, is a literal Translation of the Original, *aut exuritur igni*; and (as a noble and learned Writer has lately observed) "is particularly remarkable, as it bears so near a Resemblance to the Modern *Purgatory*, that, were the same Words found in a Christian Poet, they could not be construed to any other Signification." Lord Orrery's Observat. on Pliny's 9th Epist. B. v.

(b) *Osso Frisingentis*—Lib. viii. Chron. c. 26. *Esse locum purgatorum*—quidam asserunt. That there is a Place for the Purgation of Souls—some assert.

who

who writes of it in such Terms as plainly imply, there were great Numbers, even in his Time, who doubted of it, or rather, that there were but few, in Comparifon, who asserted it. And if *Purgatory* itself was fo lately known, you may be fure that the gainful Cheat of praying Souls out of it, and the Doctrine of *Indulgences*, was not earlier. Such is the Antiquity of thefe Peculiarities in the *Roman* Religion, and the Antiquity of the reft, I do assure you, is much the fame. And now I leave you to judge, if that Religion, the leading and distinguishing Points of which came fo late into the Church, can be called *the old Religion*, with any Propriety and Truth.

SECT. IV.

Shewing, that, in the Devotion of the Church of Rome, there is nothing that can juftly recommend it, before the Church of England, or other Protestant Churches.

THE pretended extraordinary Devotion of that Church is certainly a Prejudice, in Favour of it, very popular, and as frequently inculcated by the *Missionaries* and others, upon those whom they propose to profelyte, as any other whatsoever. And they tell us of several who have gone over to them, upon this Motive. If the Sincerity of such Converts cannot be doubted of, and there be no Ground to suspect, that they give out this, as the true Motive to their Conversion, instead of some other, which they cannot so decently avow, we must then say, either that they

are not sufficiently acquainted with, or do not sufficiently consider those excellent Means, Provisions, and Opportunities for Devotion, which are afforded in the *Protestant* Churches, the Church of *England* more especially, or that they have mighty odd Notions and Conceptions, of that Devotion which is pleasing and acceptable to God.

Devotion, in the large Sense of the Word, signifies a Life given up, and *devoted* to God. But I must take it here in the more limited Sense, for Prayer, private or publick, because the Pretence of greater Devotion in the Church of *Rome*, I apprehend, is chiefly meant by those who urge it, as well as understood by those upon whom it is urged, in that Sense. As to private or secret Devotion, I shall not dwell upon it, there being no plausible Colour for pretending to greater Opportunities, or Assistances, for the Exercise of it, in the Church of *Rome*, than in our Church. Our People have certainly as many Opportunities for the Practice of this Duty, if they will but lay hold, and make use of them. Their Helps to it are also as many, and as good; there being, I am persuaded, no Country following that Communion, nor indeed any other, better provided with excellent Manuals of Devotion, than are to be found here, composed by the Divines, and other pious Members of our Church.

They have, however, a great deal to say to you in regard to publick Devotion, and the greater Opportunities and Advantages for it, in their Church. And whenever they fall upon this Subject, they are sure to put you in mind of the *Monasteries*,

vaſteries, which *Roman Catholic* Countries abound with, (while we have none of them) where People of both Sexes, having renounced *the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World*, give themſelves up entirely to God, and are *Evening and Morning, and at Noon-Day*, celebrating his Praiſes, and calling upon him. We own, we have no Foundations of this Sort, nor do we deſire to have any, of the ſame Conſtitution, and under the ſame Rules, with theirs. For though we eſteem a regular Courſe of publick Devotion very commendable, and the very beſt Thing that belongs to theſe Foundations, we think it a Point that *may be*, and *is* overſtrained in moſt of them, where the Returns of Prayer are ſo frequent, and at Times ſo ill-choſen, at all the moſt improper, and moſt unſeaſonable Hours of the Night, even the very deadeſt Time of it, as make it a perfect Drudgery, and a Burthen, which few of them are able to bear. And I leave you to judge, if ſuch forced and drowſy Prayers which they muſt ſubmit to, and go through, tho' with ever ſo much Reluctance and Diſcontent, can be either acceptable to God, or much beneficial to their own Souls. As to their Retirement from the World, which is pretended to be a great Help to their Devotion, I don't ſee there is much in it, even with reſpect to the female Sex, who are moſt ſhut out from it. The Solitude of a Wilderneſs, to which the antient *Aſcetics* and *Monks* fled from Perſecution, would naturally excite Devotion in ſerious Minds; but not ſo, the Solitude of a *Convent*, where perhaps, a hundred young Females, altho' kept from the promiſcuous Converſation of

the World, live together within the same Walls, and, at all Times, when the Task of Prayer is over, quarrel, or intrigue, walk, or work, laugh and play, jest and droll, with as much Readiness, and talk as *idly*, as any of those who are most conversant in the World.

I can't see but the Members of our Church, especially those who reside in great Towns and Cities, and more particularly in *London*, have as great, or greater Opportunities for the Exercise of Prayer, and other publick Acts of Devotion, than those who are shut up in the Monasteries. Here (as I had formerly Occasion to observe [*i*]) “such
“ Persons as have no Attachment to the World,
“ and are of devout Tempers, may live as retired,
“ and say their Prayers as often, as they please,
“ not only every Day, but almost every Hour of
“ it. And there is scarcely a Day in the Week,
“ but they may hear the Word of God preached
“ in some or other of the Churches, nor in some
“ Parishes, any Lord's Day, but they may receive
“ the Sacrament upon it. There, too, they may
“ say their Prayers, and say them often, without
“ Weariness, because without Force and Compul-
“ sion; and may be Recluses, without that Spleen,
“ Melancholy, and Spiritual Pride, which prevail
“ so much in the Convents.” And they have also this further Advantage, that all the while they are thus serving God, they may serve and do good, many Ways, in their Generations, which those who are engaged in the *Monastick* Way of Life

[*i*] First Letter to a Dissenting Gentleman, p 69. 3d Edit.

have disabled themselves from, and are incapable of doing.

The Number of their *Festivals* is also commonly reckoned amongst their Advantages for Devotion. The Number of them is indeed very great; greater than consists with the good of the State, or than is necessary to keep up a Spirit of Devotion among the People. We have as many as are necessary to answer this End, and those so ordered, as to answer it vastly better, than the same *Festivals*, as they are ordered in the Church of *Rome*. Our *Festivals* are observed for the thankful Remembrance of the great Passages and Circumstances of our Lord's Life and Death, Resurrection, and Ascension into Heaven, and of the great Atchievements of his Apostles and Evangelists, in spreading the Knowledge of his Gospel among all Nations, whereby *we* have been called, out of Darknes, into the marvellous Light of it. And they are kept by us with reading the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, that are relative to these holy Persons; with praising God for the Doctrine they taught, and the glorious Examples they have exhibited to the World, and beseeching him, thro' the only Merits of his Son, our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, to give us Grace that we may lead our Lives according to their Doctrines and Examples, and *follow them, as they followed Christ*. This Way of keeping our Festivals is much more conducive to true Piety and Devotion, as well as more consistent with true *Christianity*, than praying directly to themselves, or praying to God *through their Merits*, which are none at all. And if these Festivals,

kept in the Way of that Church, are so obstructive of true Devotion, as well as destructive to the Sanctity of the Faith, what must we think of those which are kept in Memory of fictitious Saints, who never were in being, or of those, whose Story is merely legendary and fabulous, or of the upstart Saints lately canonized in the Church of *Rome*, and peculiar to it. I don't pretend to know all the *Festivals*, that are now observed in that Church, which of them are yet retained, and which it has been thought proper to abrogate, and lay aside, that Room may be made for others. I can't precisely say, whether the Church yet keeps the Feast of *St. Christopher*, the Gyant, who walk'd over an Arm of the Sea, with our Saviour at his Back,—or that of *St. Ursula*, and the Eleven thousand Virgins, her Companions, who all died Martyrs, in Defence of their Chastity,—or of *the Seven Sleepers*, who slept Three hundred Years, and then awoke, as young and fresh as before—or of *St. Wenefrede*, who lived, I think, some Years after her Head was cut off, and set on again—or of *St. Catharine of Sienna*, whom *Jesus Christ* treated with so much Familiarity, as to come often from Heaven to teach her to read, to sweep her Chamber, and make her Fire for her—or that of the Saintess (*St. Brigit* it was, if my Memory does not fail me) to whom he condescended to be married [*a*]*—*or that of *St. Anthony of Padua*, who

[*a*] He was also married to *St. Catharin of Sienna* before-mentioned, the *Virgin Mary* his Mother, *St. John the Evangelist*, *St. Paul*, and *St. Dominick* being present at the Ceremony, and all the while it was performing, sweetly singing the *Psalms of David*. He was also married to her Name-Sake of *Bologna*, and, I think, to *St. Agnes* too. I hope the Compilers of their Legends have been mindful to adjust the Chronology of these Ladies, and of all others he may have been preached

preached a Sermon, with great Approbation, to an Audience of Fishes, which might be, 'tis likely, miraculously endowed with the Faculty of Hearing, on that Occasion, that a Discourse so full of Comfort and Edification, might not be lost upon them. Nor do I certainly know, whether they yet keep the Feast of our tutelary Saint, *St. George*, who slew the Dragon, or if he did not slay him, made him, however, so tame, that a poor Girl could lead him, like a Dog, in her Girdle, about the City. I am not certain (I say) whether these Saints and Saintesses have their Festivals yet observed in the Church of *Rome*. But this I am certain of, that some of them are held, there, in too much Honour and Veneration for their Feasts to be soon laid aside, or forgotten. But, pray, what Benefit, in respect to Devotion, or any thing else can be expected from their Observation? Or rather, what Mischief may we not justly apprehend from it? What Nonsense to keep the Memorials of those who never existed! And to read to the People, for their Instruction and Consolation, idle Dreams, long and wonderful Stories, past all Belief, such as those I have before mentioned! What Folly and Impiety to address our Prayers to them, even those of them who have existed, of whom some rather deserved to be chronicled as Fools and Fanatics, than canonized as Saints! Nor is there much less Impiety in praying to *God himself*, that our Sins may be pardoned, married to, so as not to make them live at the same Time, or, however, that they have taken Care to translate into Heaven the former Spouse, before he was married to the next. Else, his Example may be alledged by Libertines in Favour of Polygamy, or arbitrary Divorce. But, however that be, I think it may fairly be pleaded for Priests' Marriage.

and

and that we may come to eternal Blessedness, thro' their holy Merits and Intercession.

Pilgrimages and *Processions* are two other celebrated Instances of the Devotion of that Church, which the *Protestant* Churches give no Countenance and Encouragement to. As to the former, they are always indeed performed under Pretence of Devotion, but generally speaking, without the Spirit of it. The greatest Part of the lower Sort of People who go on *Pilgrimages* are lazy Drones, or wicked Villains; and those of the better Sort go rather in Quest of Pleasure, or to satisfy an idle Curiosity, than for the Exercise of Devotion. *Gabriel d'Emillianne* has exhibited to us a most ridiculous Mixture of Devotion and Drunkenness, in one of the *German* Pilgrim-Bands, going to visit the holy Relick of *Maladurne*; as, in another from *Bononia* to *Loretto*, he has shewn us so much good Cheer, and making much of themselves, so much Mirth and Comedy, such an Air of Gaiety and Libertinism in their whole Behaviour, and such free Talk between the two Sexes (of all which he was an Eye and Ear-Witness) as, methinks, was not mightily becoming, nor could be much for the Tooth of *Devoto's* and *Penitents*. There is, I am sure, no Devotion, or Religion of any Sort, in visiting holy Places (no, not *Loretto* itself, tho' the Story of the wonderful Transportation of the *Santa Casa* had been ever so true) in this Spirit. And tho' they were visited with the devoutest Spirit in the World, the same Spirit with which *Paula* and *Eustochium* visited the holy Places at *Jerusalem*, there would be therein no true and acceptable Devotion,

while

while accompanied with so much Superstition, as is well known to be practised, and so long as it is directed to such false Objects, as are set up, in those Places, to receive the Adorations of the People.

Nor is there commonly to be seen, in their *Processions*, any more of the true Spirit of Devotion, than in their *Pilgrimages*. For as to their Prostrations and Adorations of the Host, or of the Image of the holy Virgin, or whatever else the Procession is made in Honour of, they cannot be considered, as Acts or Instances of Devotion, and Piety, but rather of Impiety, and a dishonouring of God. Every thing besides favours of the Spirit of this World; especially in their grand and more solemn Processions, which yet (methinks) should have a higher Seasoning of Devotion, than the more plain and ordinary ones. In some Countries, 'tis likely, where they are mix'd with *Protestants*, they may be somewhat more modest and reserved. But in *Italy* (for Instance) where *Popery* is more rampant, and carries all before it, and there are no *Protestants* to make their Observations, and to pass their Censures upon the Indecencies and Extravagancies of them, the Priests and Monks give their Invention more Scope, and do often dress up and conduct the Pageantry with such Figures and Circumstances, as excite Laughter, rather than Devotion, and give just Offence to all serious and religious Minds. I shall not attempt to describe to you these lovely *Processions*, and to set before you all the offensive and scandalous Passages thereof, as well because I have no pleasure in exposing, to Contempt and
Laughter,

Laughter, any thing that pretends to be a religious Exercise, as because they are really so shameful, that our *English* Papists, who can have none of these Things, and have never been abroad to behold them with their Eyes, or had an Opportunity, or, perhaps, Leave given them, to look into those Books where they are truly represented and described, may be apt to think they are all Calumnies. But upon a View of all the Particularities of these *Processions*, one cannot help believing, that they were instituted, and are encouraged, not so much for stirring up the Devotion of the People, as for amusing and pleasing them, and for the Profit and Honour of the Priests and Monks, who always appear, on such Occasions, in their finest Habili-ments, in all their Bravery, Majesty, and Glory, to inspire the Laity (as to be sure, they do) with some Sort of Veneration for them.

The Grandeur and Stateliness of their Churches, with the Richness of their Furniture and Decorations, are often set as great Instances of Devotion, as well as Incitements to it, before the Eyes of such *Protestants* as they judge weak enough, or of such Tempers and Dispositions as make them more liable to be dazzled with such Things. Now we have no quarrel, they may be sure, with magnificent Churches, having many such among ourselves. Neither do we think that some Expence in the adorning of them is Money thrown away, or employed to no useful Purpose. For we encourage the ornamenting our own Churches with Modesty and Sobriety, tho' we don't think it a reasonable Thing, or what Religion requires, or indeed permits, that

the greatest part of the Riches of a Country should be thrown into, and lie dead in them, which is too plainly the Case of some Countries of the *Roman Catholic* Communion, where the Wealth of their Churches is not more visible than the general Poverty and Misery of the People.

We, then, (I say) very willingly allow that the building and adorning of Churches in the most decent manner that can consist with the Modesty and Gravity of the Christian Worship, is a good Thing in itself; and we, accordingly, give those their just Commendation, who, we have Reason to believe, do this from a Motive of sincere Piety. But, at the same time, we are very sensible, that Works of this Kind do not always proceed from a sincere Piety, and therefore are no sure Tokens and Proofs of it. But as Vain-Glory, a Desire to be remembered and talk'd of, has laid the Foundations of many noble Charities, so, in all likelihood, it has built many noble Churches, made them glitter with Gold and Silver, Gildings and Paintings, and filled them with the richest and most magnificent Furniture. Lord *Clarendon* observes [b], from *Mezeray*, that there were, in no Time, more Churches and Abbies built, than in the tenth Century, and tells us by whom they were built, by the Children of those Barbarians, the *Goths*, *Huns*, and *Vandals*, the *Saxons* and *Danes*, who had been some time before converted to *Christianity*, but were still almost as brutish and savage, as their *Pagan* Forefathers. *These wicked Persons affected* (says he) *the Title of Founders*;

[b] Animadversions upon Cressy's Fanaticism fanatically imputed to the Catholic Church, p. 48.

while they ruined some Churches, they built others, and made sacrilegious Offerings to God of those Things which they had ravaged from the Poor. Here, we may see it was not a Motive of pure Piety and Devotion to which we owe all our Churches of ancient and *Popish* Erection, but a great part of them, at least, are to be placed to the Account of Motives of a quite different Nature.

And as no certain Judgment can be made of the real Piety of particular Persons by their Bounty and Liberality in building and decorating the Places of God's public Worship, so neither can the Devotion and Piety of whole Churches and Countries be estimated, with any Degree of Certainty, that way. If it could, then the Riches of their Churches would be in some reasonable Proportion to the Devotion of the People, whereas we find it is, in many Places, remarkably otherwise. The Churches are scarce any where more magnificent, and possessed of greater Riches than at *Naples* and *Venice*; yet the *Neapolitans* have never been famous for their Devotion; and the *Venetians* are as much, and, perhaps, more estranged from it, greater Lovers of Pleasure, corrupter in their Morals, more ignorant of Religion, and unconcerned about it, than any People whatsoever of the *Roman Catholic* Communion; and (as Bishop *Burnet* has observed [a]) *the Pomp of their Ceremonies, and the Wealth of their Churches is rather affected, as a Point of Magnificence, or Matter of Emulation amongst Families, than that Superstition has, here, such a Power*

[m] Travels, Letter III.

over

over the Spirits of the People, as it has elsewhere. In some particular Countries, or Communités of *Christians*, there may be, at certain Times, a Humour, a Mode, or Fashion, to erect stately and magnificent Churches, and to bestow liberal Donations upon them. And this for political Reasons, may be encouraged by Princes, more especially ecclesiastical, as the Pope; and this, in fact, is the Case, at *Rome*. The Popes having found the Way to draw to themselves the Devotion, and, by consequence, the Riches of all *Catholic* Countries, and thereby gathered immense Heaps of Treasure, be-thought themselves of some Method for employing that Treasure, and making it turn to the best Account. And taking Notice that the Devotion of Pilgrims, who were wont to be extremely liberal in their Offerings, was very profitable, they conceived, they could not better employ the Riches they had amassed together, than by erecting and adorning magnificent Churches, and filling them with pretended precious Relicks, whereby Swarms of Pilgrims might be invited to come amongst them. Hence the magnificent Churches which *Rome* boasts of, the Proofs, not of its Piety, but its Policy. And in other Countries of the *Roman Catholic* Communion, as well as in *Rome* and *Italy*, the Splendor and Magnificence of the Churches serve the Views and Interests of the Papacy many Ways, for which Reason, they are so much encouraged there, and so much Rhetoric is employed in recommending the Erection and adorning of them. The Priesthood is hereby aggrandized in the Eyes of the Laity, when they are viewed as presiding
and

and commanding in these noble Structures, and as the Guardians of all the Wealth that is deposited and glitters in them. The Rabble is amused and astonished, kept from reflecting, or thinking that any Thing is amiss, or needs Reformation; as in some States, the Populace have been kept, from perceiving the Excesses, the Errors, or Misfortunes of the Administration, by being continually presented with Shews and Spectacles, and having set before them the Opportunities for Pleasures and Diversions of all Sorts. And as their own People are hereby retained in their Communion, so they hope, by the same Means, to draw *Protestants* into it. And, accordingly, our *Protestant* Youth, who go Abroad raw and unfurnished with just Notions of the Christian Religion, are commonly attempted this Way. See the Magnificence and Riches of these Temples! The Pomp and Splendor with which the Worship is performed here! Enough, methinks, to convince you, if there was nothing else! And those who are wholly governed by Sense and Imagination, and incapable of thinking and reasoning justly upon Things, are often struck, and come Home with visible Prejudices in Favour of such a pompous Religion; whilst those, who go amongst them in riper Years, or with Minds replenished with just Conceptions of Religion, do generally come Home more confirmed *Protestants* than they were before. Such an Attempt as this was made upon *Charles I*, when Prince of *Wales*, at the Court of *Spain*, where no Expence was spared to decorate their Churches, and entertain him with the most splendid and pompous Processions. Yet,
tho'

though he had no Averſion to ſomething of Magnificence in the Performance of holy Offices, (which 'tis likely they had diſcovered) he was too ripe in Underſtanding, and too well inſtructed in Religion, to be caught by ſo childiſh a Bait.

As to what they further ſay, that the Splendor of their Churches will help to beget Devotion, there is, I confeſs, ſome Colour of Truth in it. Yet, it is but a Colour. Their ſplendid and luſtrous Appearance may produce Amazement, Admiration, and Delight, eſpecially, at firſt Sight, and in Perſons whoſe Eyes have not been accuſtomed to ſuch Scenes. But Admiration, or Delight, is one Thing, and Devotion another. That which, in Churches, ſtrikes the Spirit with Devotion, and produces a great Senſe of the divine Preſence, is, *not* their Shine and Glitter, but their ſolemn, their auſt, and venerable Appearance, and this wholly, or chiefly, ariſing from the Grandeur and Statelineſs, with the awful Gloom, and ſome other Circumſtances and Qualities of the Structure, our Churches, it may be preſumed, are nigh as well fitted to answer this end, as thoſe of the *Roman Catholic* Communion.

The Furniture of Paintings, (eſpecially, as ſome of them are not very decent) of Images, and Crucifixes, whereof there is ſuch Plenty in all Churches of that Communion, may very well be ſpared, as being evidently great Occaſions of Idolatry. And if the Uſe of them could be, and was actually, ſeparated from Idolatry, I don't ſee which way they can poſſibly be any Help either to the Inſtruction, or the Devotion, of the People. The *Papiſts* call

them, the Books of the Ignorant and Unlearned. But what do they teach them? What will the Image or Picture of the *Virgin Mary* teach a Rustick, though he looks ever so long at it? If he does not know beforehand, that, in *Judæa*, there was a Virgin of that Name, and that this is designed for her Image or Representation, he could never discover it by any View he could take of her. And after he knows it is her Image, what more, than *that* can he learn from it? Can he learn whether she was handsome, what her Complexion, what her Features, or any thing else about her, were? How can it be, when among the *Madona's* one meets with in different Places, there are not, perhaps, two that are alike, and many of them are said to be no other than the Mistresses of the Sculptors or the Painters by whom they were finished. And even *that* in the Church of the *Anonciade* in *Florence*, which they believe *there*, so far as to her Face, to be done by an Angel, while the Painter was fallen asleep in the Church, bears (as they tell us) no manner of Resemblance with those Portraits of her, by the Hand of *St. Luke*, (though in all likelihood, they both knew her well, and had conversed with her) the Angel having given her a round Face, fair and ruddy, with lively and brisk Eyes, and a low Forehead, while that painted by *St. Luke* is long and swarthy, with an humble and modest Look, and a Forehead high and prominent. The Crown upon her Head, and the Sceptre in her Hand may, perhaps, teach him she was a Queen. But then they teach him a Lie; she not being, either while she was on Earth, a Queen,

Queen, but only the Wife of *Joseph*, an ordinary Man, nor now she is in Heaven, the King of Heaven being jealous of his Honour, and not enduring that any mere Creature (for a Creature she is, tho' they call her a Goddess) should be the Consort and Partner of his Government; or if that could be supposed, not having afforded the Church of *Rome* any conceivable way whereby to know it. Or what will he learn by looking on a Crucifix? He cannot learn thereby so much as that there was such a Person as *Jesus Christ*, who was crucified. For he must know *that*, before he can tell what to make of it. Much less can he learn from it the least Part of the Doctrine he taught, or of the Story of his Life. You may see by this how poor a Help to Knowledge an Image or a Crucifix is. Nor is it a much better help to Devotion. For if the dumb, material, Representation of our Saviour's Cross and Passion may raise, in some Souls, that are extremely sensible and tender, certain sensitive Passions and Emotions, they are quickly over, and do not leave, upon the Mind, such lasting and useful Impressions, as the reading, or hearing with our Ears, the Story of it, as it is related by the holy Evangelists, with the most noble and affecting Simplicity.

There is yet one thing more which the *Papists* recommend to our Notice, as a mighty Advantage to Devotion, and that is, the Pomp and Ceremony with which they perform the divine Offices. But, sure, it would have been wiser, to have been silent, if we would have let them be so, upon this head. For the Pomp and Pageantry, as well as

the Multiplicity, the Obscurity, or Impertinence, of their Ceremonies, is the very thing, which, next to their Idolatry, does most offend and alienate us (as sure it must all who have any sober and rational Conceptions of Christianity) from their Worship. For though we are not so morose, as to be offended with all Forms and Ceremonies in divine Worship, we would not have a Worship that is covered with them, as it is in the Church of *Rome*, particularly, in the Mass, where the Priest is enjoined so many Crossings, and Bowings, knockings of the Breast, joinings and stretchings out of Hands, and even pulling off the Shoes, incensings and perfumings, leanings (forsooth) upon the Altar, kissings of it, affected sinkings, and then raisings of the Voice, with starting, as if he were suddenly awaked out of Sleep, lifting up of the Eyes, and looking down again, washings of his Fingers, and then joining them to the Thumbs, coverings and uncoverings of the Pattine, and playing of it against the Chalice, tinklings of Bells, and Prostrations thereupon, in a word, such a heap of Ceremonies of this Sort, as makes the Service little better than a theatrical Shew, an Entertainment merely for the Senses and Imaginations of the People. And the other Offices of the Church are stifled with Ceremony well nigh as much as this. And besides the Number and Variety of their Ceremonies, their Meaning and Signification, if they have any at all, is so hidden, that it may be easily supposed there are very few who have the least Notion or Apprehension of it. Meanings, it is true, have been assigned to them by those who have taken in hand

to expound the Offices of the Church. But they are such Meanings as one would hardly think could ever be intended by the Compilers of the Offices, but, rather, have been found out, since, by the hard straining, and laborious Efforts of the Imagination. They are perfect Riddles to the common People; not to say that some of them are really offensive, and want common Decency.

Are these, then, the Ceremonies so mightily assisting to, and so excellently fit to kindle, and keep up the Orders of Devotion? No, they are rather like cold Water thrown upon it. There is not much Beauty and Excellence, that I can perceive, in the Composition of the Text of the Mass. But to me it would appear much better fitted to advance Devotion and Piety (if Piety and Devotion can be advanced by Prayers that are so *heterodoxical*) if it were stript of all, or most of the Ceremonies appertaining to it, which, like the Ornaments and Decorations of their Churches before spoken of, serve more for the Amusement and Diversion of the People, than any thing else. Some of them have merrily told us, that our Religion is so well nigh stript of all the Garniture of Ceremony, as to be fit only for Philosophers. Well, be it so; and let these, if they please, be the Characters of the two Religions, that ours is calculated for Philosophers only, and theirs only for the Rabble.

If, after all, however, the Offices of that Church were ever so excellently composed, and the Devotions of it were directed ever so rightly; yet considering the established Practices, and current Doctrines of the Church, it must, nevertheless, yield

to the *Protestant* Churches, in the Matter of Devotion. For a Form of Devotion thoroughly understood by the People, though it were but indifferently, or meanly composed, would be infinitely preferable to the finest, or noblest Compositions in an unknown Language. Tho' an Angel from Heaven had the making of them, they would not edify at all. Nor would they edify more, though they were in the vulgar Tongue, if the People did not hear, or did not mind them, neither of which they are obliged to do, if *Suarez* and *Salmeron*, and forty others, grave Doctors, of that Church, are to be credited. 'Tis enough (say they) if the Words of divine Offices are but said, that is, said right, so that there be no Mistake or Blunder committed, in the saying of them? 'Tis no great Matter with what Disposition they are said, or with what Attention they are regarded. It may be some Commendation, if you do attend to them, but 'tis not necessary. Nay, 'tis not necessary you should hear them. Do but afford your bodily Presence in the Place where they are said, and that will be sufficient. This is, at *Rome*, catholic Doctrine. And (to say the Truth) they are herein perfectly consistent with themselves. For it would be hard to oblige Men to give Attention to Prayers, which they don't understand, or to hear those, which they are not obliged to attend to.

Matters being thus ordered in the Church of *Rome*, one would wonder how the *Roman Catholics* can have the Assurance to talk to us of the Devotions of their Church, or how any *Protestant* can be persuaded to think (as I am apt to believe some do)

do) that there is really to be seen, in their Church, more Devotion than in ours, or other Churches of *Protestants*. There must, surely, be something that gives Countenance and Support to so much Confidence, on the one Side, and Occasion for so great a Mistake and Illusion, on the other. We will see, if we cannot discover what it is.

Let us observe, then, once again, (for, I think, I had once before Occasion to take notice of it) that the Church of *Rome*, with great Prudence and Policy, has so contrived Matters, as to have Principles and Maxims, suited to the Tempers and Inclinations of all sorts of Persons. Some of their Doctors will teach you a strict and austere Morality, and a very sublime Devotion, and indeed have carried, in some Particulars, the Practice of it to such an extravagant Height, as is no better than Folly and Fanaticism, as I shall afterwards have Occasion to shew more at large. This, I suppose, is done lest the Church should seem to be wanting to the Wishes of those whose natural Tempers and Complexions lead them that way, while another Sett of their Doctors teach and inculcate Maxims, both in respect of Morality and Devotion, that are extremely loose and scandalous, that so the Worldly, the Sensual, and Debauch'd may also be gratified, and made easy in *their* ways. This Part the *Jesuits* seem to have taken, as plainly appears from the loose and libertine Determinations of the Casuists of that Order, both in practical, and devotional Matters. Now, it is to be feared that the bulk and generality of the People follow these, and particularly, in the Performance of the divine Offices,

wherein they shew as much, and no more Attention and Devotion than they are told, by these Guides, is absolutely necessary. But there being here and there one, who pursues the Maxims of the other, and gives himself up to some enthusiastical Flights of Devotion, the Church, it seems, has the Credit (such as it is) of their Enthusiasms. The trifling, childish, frantick Piety of these, which the primitive Church would certainly have disowned, and, perhaps, censured, is cry'd up by the injudicious or designing Writers of that Communion; and being display'd before the Eyes of ignorant, and easy *Protestants*, does often dazzle them, and give them a mighty Opinion of the Sanctity of that Church, which has had the breeding of Men and Women in so high a State of Devotion; while the sober, rational, solid, manly, and real Devotion which is taught and practised in the Church of *England*, is made little account, and meanly thought of, in Comparison.

As to a greater Appearance of Devotion in their Churches than in ours, I can easily believe it, if we speak of that which is directed to the Host, to Crucifixes, and the Statues of the Saints. We are sensible, there is Devotion enough, and too much, paid to *these*. It would amaze a Man to see the profound Humility with which they address themselves to their Images, to behold a Preacher caressing and kissing of his Crucifix, and saying the softest and tenderest things to it, in order to draw Tears from himself, and his Auditory, (which, however, he often fails of) or to survey an Assembly, one and all, falling down, and worshipping a Wafer (made of Flour and Wax, and more, perhaps,

haps, of the latter, than of the former) as if it were the Lord their Maker. The Sight is truly amazing, though not mighty edifying, unless it be in the way of shaming both them and us, for not approaching our Creator with so profound a subjection of Soul and Body, as they do the Creatures of his Hands. With respect to their common and general Behaviour in religious Assemblies, whether it be, or not, more serious, regular, and decent, than that of *Protestants* in theirs, I cannot say I have seen enough of it, to decide either way. But those who *have* tell us, there is a good deal of light and careless Behaviour in those Places; as from the Lessons, before mentioned, that *have* been given them of the No-necessity of Attention, and the Sufficiency of their being barely present at divine Offices, it may be expected there should be. They may be, for any thing I can tell, something more regular and uniform in performing their Gestures, and observing the Rites of their Worship, than *Protestants* are generally seen to be. And no wonder if they are; it being reckoned, amongst *them*, a grievous Sin, and a Matter of great Scruple, not to observe precisely all the Ceremonies of the Church. But external and bodily Gestures are no sure Signs of inward Piety and Devotion, no surer than Words are. A Hypocrite can knock his Breast as easily, as he can say, when he does it, *mea culpa*, or *I am a miserable Offender*, and he may do the one with no more Contrition and Compunction, than he *says* the other.

Thus I have taken a Survey of *Roman Catholic* Devotions, and I flatter myself you will be now in

no great Danger of being enamour'd with them. I have been pretty large in my Survey of them, because of the Number and Variety of Particulars which naturally come, under this Head, into Consideration. The next thing to be considered is the Charity of that Church.

S E C T. V.

Shewing; that Roman Catholic Charity is no reasonable Prejudice in Favour of the Church of Rome, or Recommendation of it.

THE Care of the Poor, or the Comforting and Succouring all them who are in Need, Sickness, or any other Adversity (for that is the Charity which the *Roman Catholics* chiefly boast of, and labour to recommend their Church by, to the good liking of Protestants) is, without Question, a popular thing, and naturally makes a deep Impression upon the Hearts of all Sorts, but particularly, the meaner and lower sorts of People, who either need, or think it not unlikely they may, some time or other, stand in need of such Assistance. We see how easily one of these overlooks and excuses very great Faults, and even foul Sins, in any particular Person, if he be of a free and bountiful Disposition, and liberally bestows his Goods to relieve the Wants of those about him. The like Prejudice he will be apt to have in Favour of any Church or Community of Christians, whom he shall observe, or who, he is made to believe, are remarkable for charitable Works. He will kindly overlook the Errors and Corruptions of that Church

at least, think of them more favourably than he ought to think, and scarce be persuaded that any Religion can be very bad, which produces plenty of such good Fruits. But this is a groundless and unreasonable Prejudice. For we read of many, and every Day see some, who, though they have very bad Religions, are, nevertheless, ready enough to give, and *glad to distribute*, and do, perhaps, other Acts of Charity and Beneficence, that are extraordinary. Who could say higher and greater things for Liberality and Bounty to the Poor, and recommend the providing for them in stronger Terms, than *Julian* the Apostate, the most inveterate Enemy of Christianity. And how could that Point be carried higher than it has been by some of the worst sort of Christians, when they introduced a Community of Goods, the Rich disclaiming the Right and Property of their Possessions, and taking the Poor in, to share, equally with themselves, in the Use of them. Such (they tell us) were some of the antient Heretics, and of later Days, the frantick, rebellious, enthusiastical Rabble of *Anabaptists* in *Germany*, and *Family of Love* among ourselves. From these Instances you may plainly perceive, that it is a very fallacious way of judging of the Goodness of any Religion, by the Charitable Dispositions, or the charitable Works, of those who profess it, and that it would be Folly to suffer yourself to be prejudiced in Favour of the *Romish*, or any other Church, by the great things you are told, or see with your own Eyes, they have done, in that way. Especially, if it appears, they did them with a View to support and maintain their

their Religion, or Heresy, to give it Reputation, and to spread it wider in the World. And this was really the Case of all the Persons before mentioned. For as to *Julian*, his View in striving so much to persuade the *Pagans* to Deeds of Charity and Beneficence, was plainly no other than the Support of *Paganism*, and the Overthrow of *Christianity*. For taking Notice, that the Charity of *Christians* towards their Brethren, and, as they had Opportunity, towards all Men, gave their Religion great Credit and Reputation in the World, and, perhaps, promoted, in some Measure, the Encrease of it, he was for trying to support the sinking Credit of the *Pagan*, and to extirpate the *Christian* Religion, the same Way. And as to the *Hereticks* and *Enthusiasts* before spoken of, their confining the Communication of their Goods to their own Followers and Adherents plainly shews, they had no other Aim than the Support of their Party, and drawing Numbers into it. Here, was indeed a mighty Pretence and Shew of Charity to the Poor, but, all the while, true Charity was wanting. And if the boasted Charities of *Roman Catholics* are done with a strong Mixture of the like, or other worldly and sinister Designs, and not purely for the Love of *Christ*, (as, in all likelihood, most of them will be found to be) they may be commended as Instances of their Policy, but not of their Charity, and you will not, I hope, suffer yourself to be byass'd, in Favour of their Church and Religion, by any pompous Accounts of their Charities, which the Missionaries, or others, shall set before you.

You

You are not, however, to understand what I have now said as a Concession, that the Charities of *Roman Catholics* (supposing them all to be real Charities) are greater than those of *Protestants*. For according to all the Informations I have yet received, and all the Observations I have been able to make, they really are not greater, whether we consider the publick Instances and Monuments of their Charity and ours, or the private and occasional Exercise thereof.

The building and endowing of Monasteries are used to be reckoned, and wonderfully magnified, as extraordinary Proofs of the Munificence and Charity of their Church. But we cannot allow them to be any. For where is the Charity of such Foundations and Endowments for the Reception of the younger Children of the Nobility and Gentry (for no small part both of the Monks and Nuns are such) and taking them off their Parents Hands, lest the Grandeur of the Family should be diminished, by dividing the Estate (as we poor *Protestants* are forced to do) amongst all the Children. And with respect to the rest, where is the Charity of maintaining so many hundred thousands in Sloth and Idleness, to the great Detriment, and even the Impoverishment of the Country; or in the highest Luxury and Voluptuousness (for so many of them live) to the great Offence of all serious and devout Persons even of their own Communion? Or what Charity can there be in entertaining in our Houses the begging Friars, who (generally speaking) are a Parcel of the most vicious, as well as the silliest Fellows you shall any where meet with,
who

who go about the Country trading in Indulgences, and counterfeit Relicks, and other Wares of the like sort, to abuse the Credulity and Sottishness of the People, and eating that Bread which might have been given to the real involuntary Poor. There is about as much Charity, in my Opinion, in giving Alms to these, as to those *Gypsies*, and other strolling *Vagrants*, with which our Country is infested. You will say, they possess nothing: They are under Vows of Poverty. And what if they are? Who called them to make such Vows? Who required it at their Hands? They are not more, but less the Objects of your Charity, upon that Account, as any other sort of Vagabonds, who should *vow to God* they would never again put their Hands to any Work, but beg their Living from Door to Door, would certainly be, if all, or the most of them were like the Monks of *La Trappe*, (such as they were some Years ago, and perhaps may be, at present) now working with their Hands, then studying, or reading the Word of God, and saying the divine Offices, but never intreaging either in Courts, or Families, or minding the Profits, the Pleasures, or Honours of this World, a good deal might be said in behalf of Monastery. But as the State of Monastery is at present, I know nothing plausible that can be said in Justification of it.

The stately *Hospitals* which you see at *Paris*, at *Rome*, and *Naples*, and some other Cities of the *Roman Catholic* Religion, are also wont to be much talk'd of, as Instances and Proofs of the Greatness of their Charity. Such of them as have been

been set up for accommodating and entertaining Pilgrims in their way to *Loretto*, and other Places of Devotion, being set up for the Support of a superstitious and idolatrous Worship, and the Encouragement of a Trade which is very gainful to the Pope and Priesthood, may well be considered, as to the Point of Charity, in much the same Light, as the *Monasteries*. But allowing them to be Proofs of the charitable *Intentions* (however mistaken) of those who founded and endowed them, they are, I am sure, if one half that is said of them be true, no Proofs of the charitable Dispositions of those who have had the Direction and Administration of them, most of them (it is said) receiving their Pilgrims grudgingly and insultingly, using them very harshly, providing very scantily for them, and imposing upon them the most odious Laws, as Conditions of their Entertainment, on purpose to keep off such Guests, that they may have the more of the Revenues of the *Hospital*, to share and divide among themselves. But as to that sort of *Hospitals* which have been founded for the Reception and Maintenance of those who are in Need and Necessity, or Misery of any kind, I admit them to be real Charities. But what if they are? Are they peculiar to *Roman Catholic* Countries? Have not we many noble and Magnificent *Hospitals* of our own, richly endowed, and most of them of *Protestant* Erection? Honest and industrious *John Stow*, and most of our Chroniclers, will inform you, how many of these started up at once, in the one City of *London*, and round about it, in the short Reign of our first *Protestant* King, and how well
Queen

Queen *Elizabeth*, of glorious Memory, copy'd his Example ; infomuch that a great Oracle of the Law did not stick to affirm, " that *more good Works of Piety and Charity have been founded within this Realm, during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, than in many Ages before*[a]." And if the Charity of any Church, or of any Age, can be judged of by the Number and Grandeur of these Foundations, and the Largeness of the Donations made to them, our own Church, and this present Age, has this Matter of glorying. For how many *Hospitals* have been erected *in, and about* the City of *London*, (to say nothing of other Parts of the Kingdom) within these twenty or thirty Years ? [b] And these administered, not as they generally are in *Roman Catholic* Countries, by a Parcel of pitiless and greedy Friars, who are ready to think no sort of Charity should go altogether beside themselves, but by the Nobility, the principal Gentry and Clergy of the Kingdom, with the most disinterested Benevolence, and in the noblest Manner. To say nothing of the Workhouses (the best sort of Hospitals) which are almost without Number ; nor of the Statute of

[a] Lord Chief Justice *Coke's* Pref. to 10th Vol. Rep.

[b] Westminster Infirmary, instituted by Subscription 1720.

Guy's Hospital, founded 1722.

Foundling Hospital, incorporated 1739.

London Hospital, instituted 1740.

Middlesex Hospital for Sick and Lame, and Lying-in married Women, instituted by Subscription 1745.

Small Pox Hospital at *Islington*, instituted 1746.

Corporation for Relief and Support of sick and maimed Seamen, &c. in the Merchant's Service, incorporated 1747.

Lying-in Hospital for married Women, instituted 1749.

City of London Lying-in Hospital, instituted 1750.

St. Luke's Hospital for Lunatics, 1750.

43d of *Eliz.* which, if it is not so shewy a Provision for the Poor, and does not dazzle, like stately *Hospitals*, the Eyes of Travellers and Strangers, is more than equivalent to all the *Hospitals* and Charities in *Italy*, as any one will judge who surveys the miserable Plight of the Poor there, and more particularly within the Dominions of the Pope, compared with the Condition wherein he sees them in this Kingdom. They tell us, there are many Hospitals in *Rome*. There had need be; and 'tis fit their *Holineesses* should, some way or other, provide them. For it would be very hard, if they should not provide Bread for *some* at least, of the many thousands, whom they themselves, or, under the Cover of their Authority, their Nephews, by their intolerable Oppressions and Exactions, have made Beggars.

I know not which way any just Comparison can be made between the private and occasional Charities of *Roman Catholics* and *Protestants*, nor upon what Evidence, some of *us* have fancied they can see, in the former, a more merciful and liberal Disposition towards the Poor, than in the latter. If *you* find the *Roman Catholics* about *you* do more for the Relief and Comfort of their poor Neighbours, than *you* and other *Protestants* of the Church of *England*, of the same Rank and Condition in Life, are generally found to do, 'tis more than I have yet been able to observe. Indeed, I have observed, that some of the Nobility and prime Gentry of that Religion are very ready to distribute, and come willingly enough into any charitable Work that is proposed to them. And where there

are not manifest Indications of the contrary, we are obliged, and I am as ready as any one to suppose they do it, from a Principle or Motive of right Christian Charity, and no other. And herein they act, besides a charitable, a very prudent Part. For it is certainly right to cultivate and practise some of the *popular* Virtues, in a Country, where, 'tis possible, they may, at one time or other, stand in Need, and find the Benefit, of the Good-will and Favour of the *Populace*. But, with respect to several of them, 'tis too evident, that something else, besides *ministring to the Sick, clothing the Naked with a Garment, and filling the Hungry with good Things*, is at the bottom, and that all this is only in order to other Purposes. Do but observe upon what Sort of People, for the most part, their Charities are placed, in what Manner they are used to be conducted, and what are commonly the Effects of them, and you cannot help suspecting, they have a further Aim, than satisfying, for *Christ's* Sake, the Wants and Necessities of the Body. When the Patron has made way, by bestowing his Largeesses, look about you, and see, if the Priest does not presently follow with his Books. Harken a little, and you will hear him arguing, representing, or misrepresenting, soliciting, entreating, haranguing upon the Charity of *Catholics*, appealing to themselves, if they have ever found such Proofs and Instances of it, from those of their own Communion. When Alms are bestowed in this way, they are not Charities, but Bribes; and while the Body is refreshed and comforted, the Soul is perverted, and poison'd by them.

But,

But, perhaps, you will say,—If their Bounty and Liberality, when administered with such Views, are no Proofs of their Charity, they are, however, of their Zeal for the Conversion of Men, beyond what is to be seen amongst *Protestants*. This I willingly allow. While *they* are at so much Pains to pervert and mislead, and at so much Expence to *purchase* our People, *we*, for the most Part, (to our Shame let it be spoken) as well those *in* Authority, as those *out*, quietly look on, without saying so much as, *what dost thou?* We are, some of us, so perfectly *indifferent* in all the Concerns of Religion, others so *worldly wise*, and a third Sort so *falsely polite* and complaisant, that we seem to be agreed, almost one and all, to let them do as they please, and not to disturb their Operations. This is carrying the Point of Connivance a great Way; surely, a little too far. One would think, it is enough for the Wolf, that he be suffered to prowl in his Woods, and Thickets, and dark Recesses, unmolested, and not pursued into them. But to let him enter, Time after Time, into the Sheepfolds, to kill, and destroy, and scatter the Sheep, and that, in broad Day-light, and in the Sight of the Shepherd, *whose own the Sheep are*, without giving him the least Opposition and Disturbance, is more than he looks for, and cannot but raise, in the Creature himself, a perfect Contempt of such easy Shepherds, and negligent Guardians, as have the Care of the Flock committed to them. But to say no more of this; and let us return to the Argument. The Papists, you'll say, have more Zeal than we, and are not so sparing of their

Money, to make Converts. But what can be gathered from all this? Will it follow that their Religion *is*, or, at least, that they *think* it, and are under clearer and stronger Convictions of its being truer and better than ours, than we are of ours being truer and better than theirs? Nothing like it. For a Zeal of this Sort is common to all Religions, and to all Sects of Religion, good and bad. The *Mahometans*, probably, are as zealous for their Religion, and strive to spread it, as much as the *Papists* do, to spread and make Converts to theirs; and we all know that the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were noted for *compassing Sea and Land*, sparing no Pains and declining no Hazards, *to make one Profelyte*, whom, nevertheless, our Saviour, at the same Time he was making this Observation concerning them, did not scruple to call, *Children of Hell*. 'Tis certain, there are other Motives, besides promoting the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Souls, to induce Men to undertake Conversions, such as increasing the Numbers, (a Sight which most People love to see, without having any further View) or the strengthening of their Party, in order to carry on, more effectually and successfully, some civil or worldly Interest, or the Love of Fame, and an ardent Desire to be approved and applauded, as useful Members of the Society, by those of their own Faction. And one may, I think, observe, that those Parties, whether civil or religious, which have least Truth and Honesty, are, generally speaking, most industrious in the Prosecution of their Designs. A State-Party who would change or overturn the Constitution, or are carrying

carrying on any other wicked and flagitious Design, are, for the most Part, seen to be more stirring, intriguing, and indefatigable, in drawing unwary People into their Interests and Measures, than those who have pure and upright Intentions. And those Sects in Religion who have most deviated from Truth are, generally, (if you mark it) more busy and active to gain Converts, than those who remain in it. The Industry of the former is (I suppose) owing to some Consciousness that they have Nothing to trust to, but their own Diligence and good Management; while the Indolence of the latter seems to arise from a Way of thinking they are too apt to fall into, that *the Truth* they profess *is great, and will prevail*, and that the Providence of God *is concerned* to take, and, though they were to sit still, and do Nothing, *will take Care*, for the Maintenance of it.

I thought it would be proper to take some Notice of these Things, not doubting, but the Zeal of the *Missionaries*, and other Undertakers for our Conversion, is often made an Argument in their Favour. They are not wanting (I dare say) artfully to insinuate, or more plainly to inculcate, upon such as they find will listen to them, the fearful Hazards they run to bring Souls to *Christ*, whereby they beget, in many simple and well-meaning Persons, kind Prejudices in their Behalf, and, perhaps too, in Behalf of that Church which animates and inspires so many to engage in such perilous Undertakings for us, and for our Salvation. From what has been said above, you may plainly perceive, there is no Necessity to suppose,

that all this is done purely for the Sake of Souls, but may be done to serve other Purposes. And as to the Hazards they would be thought to run from our Laws, you plainly see there are none at all, and that they themselves, whatever they may talk, do not inwardly believe there are any. For if they did, they would not, in common Prudence, take the Liberties they are every Day seen to do: They would neither be so open and unreserved in the Exercise of their Religion, nor so bold and uncautious in making Converts to it, as they are now, and have been, for some past Years.

S E C T. VI.

Shewing, that the Pretence of Infallibility, as a Privilege belonging to the Church of Rome, is vain, and no reasonable Inducement to a Protestant to enter into the Communion of it.

HITHERTO, we have considered some of the boasted Characters and Commendations which *Roman Catholics* believe, or would have us believe, are peculiar to the Church of *Rome*, whereby they hope to recommend it, and to give our Minds a new Turn in Favour of it. We will now go on to consider one or two Privileges, very extraordinary and distinguishing Privileges indeed, which they pretend are conferr'd upon it, and which, it may be presumed, they seldom forget to inculcate upon such of us, as they propose to convert to it. One is,—the *Infallibility* of their Church. The other,—*the Appropriation of Salvation* to those only who are in the Unity thereof.

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The former is to *draw* and *allure* us, the latter to *drive* us into its Communion. The Business of *Infallibility* we will examine in the first Place.

If there be in their Church such a Privilege, 'tis plain, it must be grounded upon an exprefs Promise, or positive Declaration of Holy Scripture. But no such Promise, or Declaration, appears there. For those which are usually alledged will be found to be either *personal*, concerning *him*, or *them only*, to whom they were given, or not to come up to the Sense of *Infallibility*, or else to speak of a quite different Matter. Our Lord says to St. Peter, *Matth. xvi. 18. Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.* But it was the Confession which Peter had made just before, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God*, which is called the *Rock*, whereupon the Church was to be built, not the Person of St. Peter, and much less all his Successors, either at *Rome*, or *Antioch*. Indeed, the two Cardinals, *Bellarmino* [a] and *Baronius* [b], have the Assurance to tell us, that *all* the Fathers teach the Interpretation, which is now received and adhered to, in the Church of *Rome*, viz. that St. Peter, in his Person, was the *Rock* that is here spoken of; and that this Interpretation is received and approved by the Consent of the whole Catholic Church; whereas it is certain, there were, besides this, three Interpretations, one or other of which the greater Part of the antient Fathers came into, as *Launoi* [c], a *Roman Catholic* of great Learning

[a] *De Pont. Rom. l. i. c. 10.*

[b] *Ad. 4 n. 33. N. 27.*

[c] *Epist. ad Gulielm. Voellum.*

and Ingenuity, by a particular Enumeration of them, has fully demonstrated. But supposing it was, not the *Confession*, but the *Person* of St. Peter, including also his Successors, that is the *Rock* which the Church is to be built upon, it would be no Assertion of their Infallibility. The Metaphor of a *Rock* is common, both in sacred and profane Writers, to signify *Firmness, Stability, Duration*. But it is never used, that I know of, to signify an Exemption from all Error and Mistake. And therefore it will not prove the *Infallibility* of the Church, but only its *perpetual Duration and Existence*, so that the Gates, or all the Powers of Death and Hell, shall never prevail against it, to destroy, ruin, and put an End to it.—To his Disciples he also says, *John* xvi. 13. *Howbeit, when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth—and he will shew you Things to come;* which Promise, of guiding them into all Truth, was made not only to Peter but to all the Apostles; and besides, is as plainly personal as the other, of *shewing them Things to come*; and the Church of Rome, or her Councils, may as well challenge, upon the Strength of this Promise, the Gift of *Prophecy*, which she does not do, as the Spirit of *Infallibility*, which she does.—In like Manner, he says to them all, *Matth.* xxviii. 20. *Lo, I am with you always even unto the End of the World.* And tho' it is acknowledged, this Promise was not, like the former, purely personal, but belonged to their Successors in all future Ages, the Cause of the Church of Rome is not at all help'd; for it is not a Promise of *Infallibility*, the Phrase of *Christ's* being

being with them, having only a general, vague, and indeterminate Signification, not necessarily importing an *unerring Guidance and Direction*, but only the Communication of such spiritual Aids and Assistances to them, as the Exigencies of the Church, in the several Ages of it, should require. — In 1 Tim. iii. 15. St. Paul is telling him, *how he ought to behave himself in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth*. And this, too, is one of the main Pillars the *Romish Infallibility* stands upon. But 'tis as weak, as any of the rest. For it was not the Church of *Rome*, but, unluckily, the Church of *Ephesus*, or rather *Timothy* himself, who presided there, as chief Pastor or Bishop of the Church, to whom this Title or Character is given, as it is also *Gal. ii. 9. Rev. iii. 12.* and frequently in the Writings of the antient Fathers, to other orthodox Pastors, principal Members, or eminent Martyrs of the Church, as being great Instruments in propagating Christian Truth, preserving the Church in the Belief of it, and *supporting* it against its Opposers. When so high a Claim, so extraordinary a Privilege and Prerogative, as that of *Infallibility*, is set up, there ought to be, sure, one or more Promises that are very clear and plain, or an express Testimony of Scripture for it. But I may venture to say, there is not, *there*, a much better Shew for the *Infallibility* of *Popes*, or *Councils*, than there is for the *Infallibility* of *Kings*. Nay, now I think of it, not so good. And I dare say, if what is said by *Solomon, Prov. xvi. 10.* of the King, was any where said of the Bishop or Church
of

of Rome, a divine Sentence is in the Lips of the King, his Mouth transgresseth not in Judgment, our Roman Catholics would triumph, and flourish more with that single Text, (as indeed they might do with some Appearance of Reason, for it really comes up nearer to, and sounds liker *Infallibility*) than any, or all the Texts they now produce for it. What Cardinal Cajetan has said concerning the Words, *this is my Body*, that, of themselves, and without the Authority of the Church's Interpretation, they will not rise to a Proof of *Transubstantiation*, must be confessed concerning all the Places that are used to be alledged for the *Infallibility* of the Church, that they will not come up to a Proof of it, without the Authority of an infallible Interpretation. But the Mischief is, the *infallible* Interpretation of the Church cannot come in, and have Place, here; for the *Infallibility* of its Interpretation being the very Point in Dispute, it cannot be alledged as a Proof of it. It must be some other *Infallibility* than that of the Church (which, as I said just now, is the very Question in Dispute) that can make these Passages a Proof of the Point they are brought for. If an Angel were seen to come down from Heaven, and should openly proclaim to the World, that he was sent of God, to assure us, that the Interpretation of those Passages received and approved by the Church of Rome, was right, and that how short soever the Expressions may seem to be of proving the *Infallibility* of that Church, they were really meant by our Lord and his Apostles, as Promises or Assertions of it, 'tis likely, we might be inclined to receive and embrace them, as such. But till *that*, or some
such

such Authority shall interpose, and decide, in Favour of their Interpretation, he must be, I think, a very weak, or a very partial and prejudiced Man, who can acquiesce in it.

The Scripture Proof of *Infallibility* failing, they betake themselves to reasoning and arguing upon the Matter. And they argue from the *Usefulness* and *Necessity* of there being in the Church such a Privilege as that of *Infallibility*, for the Prevention of Error, putting an End to Controversies, and preserving Peace and Unity therein. But this is a preposterous Way of arguing. When they have *first* proved from Scripture, that the Church is *infallible*, it may then be allowed them to go on, and to shew, from the Nature and Fitness of Things, the *Suitableness*, the *Usefulness*, or, if they please, and think they can make it out, the *Necessity* of such an Appointment. For whatever our Lord *has* done, that, we may be sure, is *useful* and *suitable* to be done; and we may safely venture to explain and display the *Usefulness* and *Suitableness* thereof, and even urge it as an *auxiliary*, or *subsidiary* Argument, in Concurrence with, and in Aid and Support of the Argument of *Fact*, which is the principal, and, in the present Case, the only one we can safely rely, and lay Stress upon. But to argue the other Way, and to conclude from the *supposed* Conveniency or Usefulness of an infallible Guidance in the Church, that *Christ* has, *in fact*, set up such an infallible Guidance and Direction in it, (as I said before) a preposterous Procedure, and beginning at the wrong End. And to carry the Argument to such a Height as some of them have done,

done, when they say, "that if *Christ* had not bestowed Infallibility upon the Church, he would not seem to have acted a discreet Part," is intolerable Presumption and Impiety. For what greater Presumption and Impiety can there be, than for *us* miserable, ignorant, and short-sighted Mortals to take upon *us* to say, what is *fittest* and *wisest* for *him* to do in the Guidance and Government of his Church, and to *charge him with Folly*, if he does not guide and govern it exactly in the Way which *we* imagine to be best. *We* are not competent Judges, at least, sure, not so competent as he, of what is fit, or fittest upon the whole, for him to do, in almost the plainest and simplest things, but especially in such Matters as the Conduct and Administration of the whole Catholic Church. In such things *the Wisdom of Man* may well seem *Foolishness* with God, and the *Foolishness of Man* with him the greatest *Wisdom*. *For the Thoughts of God are not as our Thoughts, nor his Ways as our Ways. But as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are his Ways higher than our Ways, and his Thoughts than our Thoughts.*

And yet, after all, if this Matter of the Usefulness and Necessity of an *infallible* Guide in the Church were look'd into, neither the one nor the other would appear, upon such a View of things as *we* are capable of taking, any thing like what the *Romanists* suppose it to be. In Speculation, indeed, it may seem to those who consider things slightly and superficially, extremely desirable, that some one Man, or Company of Men, should be appointed in the Church, who might be able to
lead

lead *Christians* into all Truth, and to decide unerringly, all Controversies that may arise among them. But a little Experience would shew the contrary, and that if such an *infallible* Tribunal were set up in it, it would not have the Effect expected from it. And for this plain Reason; because the World, in general, would never submit, and resign their Prejudices, or beloved Notions, to the Decisions of it.—We read concerning our Saviour, (*John. vi. 60.*) that the Multitude, seeing the wonderful Miracle of the Loaves, immediately thereupon concluded, that he must be the Messiah, and said among themselves, *This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the World.* Notwithstanding which, when he began to speak to them of delivering up his Flesh to be eaten, many of them were presently offended, quarrelled at him, and deserted him. This infallible Teacher, this Prophet come from Heaven, was to them no longer so, than they liked his Doctrine; but that appearing unconceivable and unintelligible to them, and giving them, therefore, some Disgust, they immediately rejected, and forsook him. And if there was now, upon Earth, a Judge and Guide, every Way as infallible as he, the Generality, or a great Part, of *Christians* would find no Difficulty to reject him, and set at naught his Doctrine, or his Decisions and Determinations in controverted Points, whenever they should thwart those Prejudices they had taken up, and were fully possessed with, or contradict the corrupt Inclinations of their Hearts. For who does not see, that most Men love themselves and their own Opinions bet-

ter than they do the Truth, and will never receive and submit to *it*, let who will teach it, when it bears hard upon them, or does not agree with the way of thinking they are at present in. So long as an infallible Teacher is for *them*, they will be for *him*. So long as he asserts and maintains *their* Opinions, they will assert and maintain *his* Infallibility, and call the whole World to bow down before it. But let him once declare *against* their Opinions and Prejudices, and they will do by *him* as the *Jews*, in the Case before mentioned, did by our Saviour, *turn their backs on him*, and walk no longer with him.—There is, therefore, you see, no arguing after this Manner,—“God has *certainly* appointed an infallible Guide in the Church, because such a Guide would be so useful.” For he would not be so useful, as ’tis pretended.

But were it ever so certain, that there is an Infallibility lodged somewhere in the Church, and that it was lodged, particularly, in the Church of *Rome*, it would be no reasonable Inducement to any *Protestant* to go over to it, or to any *Papist* to continue in it, unless he could be certain, nay, *infallibly* certain, *where*, and what Hands it was lodged in. But to find this out, some such *infallible* Director, or Interpreter of Scripture, as we just now mentioned, will be, again, necessary. For ’tis a Point of no small Difficulty, and they never could, nor ever will agree about it, among themselves. *Lo, here*, says one Part of the *Roman Church*; *Lo there*, says another Part of it, is the *infallible Guide*, and unerring Interpreter of Scripture; while a third Part is positive, he is in neither of those Places,
but

but in another Place he can direct you to. One says, *Behold, he is in the Desert* of the Church *diffusive*: Another, that *he is in the City*, where a Council, or the Church representative is assembled: Another, that you may find him *in the secret Chambers* of the *Vatican*, or Church virtual. But till they can settle it amongst themselves, and make it plain to you, which of them is the true infallible unerring Guide you stand in need of, it would be Folly in you to put your self under the absolute Guidance of either of them. Let us suppose you were travelling to some distant Place; and though you have, yourself, not only a tolerable Notion of the Road, but an exact Survey of it, and good Maps of the Country all about, you have, nevertheless, a Fancy to take a Guide with you, who can *infallibly* direct you, so that you may not be liable to take one Step out of the Way wherein you should go; and, enquiring, are told, that in the City you see, there, at the top of the Hill, you may find one, who (if you will but consent to throw away your Surveys and Maps, which are apt to mislead you, and, hood-winking yourself, grope your way after him, asking no Questions) will guide you, *infallibly*, to the Place whither you are going. I cannot tell (say you) but I might submit to these Conditions, foolish and irrational as they are, provided I knew where to find him, and could be sure, that, when he is found, he would guide me right; though I must own to you, his pretending to take away from me my Maps and Surveys, and requiring me to follow him blindfolded, and without asking Questions, is a mighty odd Circumstance,
and

and might very well raise a Suspicion of some Design to mislead, and betray me. What Part of the City does he live in, however; and what is his Name, that I may look him up, if I should resolve to put myself under his Direction. *There*, (replies your Informer) I must leave you; for there are three or four, who set up for the Office, each of them pretending that he alone has any certain Knowledge of the Road, and that the other may easily mislead you. Can the Inhabitants (you ask) inform me which of the Pretenders is the sure Guide? I doubt *not*, (says he) with any Certainty. For *they* too are divided about *that*, among themselves, this Street or Ward holding to one, while that Street or Ward holds to, and recommends another.—In such a Case, I am apt to believe you would trouble your Head no further about an *infallible Guide*; but rather, fearing you might happen on the wrong, or suspecting (which is most likely) they were all Cheats, and no one of them knew any more than the other, or than you yourself, of the Place you was going to, or the Road leading to it, you would, I am persuaded, without more ado, pursue your Journey, consulting your Maps and Surveys, and making use of your own Eyes, and getting such Informations as you could, from those you should meet, or others, whom you should happen to fall in with, going to the Place you are travelling to, and, perhaps, knowing the Way to it, better than you do. I shall not need, I suppose, to be more particular in the Application, than by assuring you, that whatever any *Roman Catholic* may think fit to tell you to the contrary, those

those of his Church are as little agreed what Hands their *Infallibility* is lodged in, as the Inhabitants of that City are represented to be, which of the Pretenders is the Person who has an *infallible* Knowledge of the Road you are pursuing, to whose Guidance you might commit yourself with Safety. And if this be the Case, if they cannot tell you, and you cannot be certain, nay, (as I said before) *with an infallible Certainty*, where their *Infallibility* is seated, it would be, I am sure, a foolish and irrational Change, if you, or any Protestant, should, for the Sake of gaining an *infallible Guidance*, renounce his Religion, and go over to the Church of *Rome*. For what Difference is there between no *Infallibility*, and an *Infallibility* which no one knows where to find, or can *infallibly* direct you to?

To let you see the better what little Reason a *Protestant* can have to turn to the Church of *Rome*, for the Sake of an *infallible* Guidance in Religion, give me leave to suppose that *you*, having renounced the Communion of our Church, had already reconciled yourself to the Church of *Rome*, upon that Motive. You have now (we will suppose) instead of the dead, unsensed Letters of the holy Scriptures, a living Guide, who would infallibly lead you into all Truth, and resolve all the Doubts you have been hitherto perplex'd with. Well, but who is it? Is it the Church diffusive? Will you go about the World, telling Noses, and collecting the Opinions of all the *Catholic* Priests and Bishops? That would be too great an Undertaking. Or suppose you should be hardy enough to enter upon it, is the Sense, pray tell me, of the Majority to

be rested in, or is it only in their general or universal Sense that Truth can *infallibly* be found? — Or will you apply yourself to a general Council? Alas, there is none now sitting, nor has been for well nigh 200 Years. And though you should live as long as *Methuselah*, 'tis thought, by wise Men, you would not see another (not even such an one as the last, which was far from being general) unless *St. Peter's* Chair should be very much shaken, and some wonderful Revolution in the *Papacy* should happen. Or is his *Holiness* at *Rome* the *infallible Guide and Judge*, on which you pin your Faith? In my Judgment, I confess, he, of all the Pretenders, has the best Claim to be so esteemed. For if *Infallibility* is to be grounded upon the Grant of our Saviour to *St. Peter*, *Thou art Peter*, &c. and *Feed my Sheep*, &c. who, in the name of common Sense, should it descend upon, if it descends at all, but upon his Successors? Will you go, then, to him? Will you cross the Seas, will you climb the *Alps*, and visit the apostolical Thresholds to lay your Doubts before him? 'Tis forty to one if he's at Leisure to hear them. *For he is a God; either he is talking*, dispatching Embassadors, or giving Audience to them, *or he is pursuing his Enemies*, the pestiferous northern Hereticks, *or he is in a Journey* to some Church or Shrine, *or peradventure he sleepeth and will not be awaked*. Or if you should chance to hear some of his Table-Talk, it is agreed on all Hands (even his greatest Flatterers will allow) that he is not *infallible* in what he shall utter at such times, but only in what he pronounces *ex Cathedra*, or in a formal judicial Manner, which, to re-
solve

olve the Doubts, and ease the Mind of *such a one as you*, he will scarcely, I guess, be at the Trouble of. By this you will perceive, there is, in the Church which I have supposed you now to have taken to, no *living infallible Guide* that is like to be of any use to you. Will you refer yourself then to the *Decretal Epistles* of the Popes, or to the *Canons* and *Definitions* of their Councils? But, besides that these are dead Letters, and unsensed Characters, as well as the Scriptures, 'tis possible you may not find, *there*, a clear Resolution of the particular Doubts and Difficulties you are labouring under, though you should have the Patience, as well as the Leisure, (for they amount, I assure you, to a good Number of massy Volumes) to read them all over. But supposing you have both Patience and Leisure for it, I may venture to say, *you* are not, and 'tis a Question, if the Priest himself, whom you shall chuse to depend upon, is Scholar enough for a thorough Understanding and Comprehension of them. For let me tell you, they are as hard to be understood, and as great Controversies have arisen even among *Roman Catholics*, about the true Meaning and Interpretation of many of *these*, as there have, among *Protestants*, about the true Interpretation of the Scriptures, the Obscurity of which they make such a mighty Stir about. And indeed, how can we expect it should be otherwise, when, not a few of the *Canons* and *Decrees* of their Councils, perhaps most of those which concern Points wherein *Catholics* do, or may, probably, differ, are *purposely* drawn up in a loose, sliding, evasive way, and couch'd in Terms of un-

certain Meaning, that so both Parties (both of them being, in other Points, good Catholics, and, therefore, neither, by any Means, to be disobliged) may think their Opinions safe, and be at Liberty to maintain them, as they please. And though he, or you, were the greatest Scholars in *Europe*, and ever so well accomplished for the right Understanding and Interpretation of the *Papal* Decrees, or *conciliary* Determinations, still your Interpretation of them would be but private, and fallible. And all *Catholics* will tell you, that a private and fallible Interpretation, though of an inspired and *infallible* Writing, cannot produce an *infallible*, but only a *rational* Certainty of Faith. — Count up now, if you please, what any *Protestant* can gain, with respect to an *infallible* Leading in Religion, by turning Papist. He has not more of an *infallible* Certainty than he had before; but as to a *rational* Certainty, he has less of it. For he had, *before*, the Authority of God's Word, which is, on all Hands, agreed to be, and certainly is, *infallible*: but, *now*, laying aside the *infallible* Word of God, or making little Account of it, he relies upon the Decisions of the Church only, which are not so certainly, and are believed only by *Roman Catholics* to be, *infallible*. Nor has he the twentieth Part of the Helps and Means for the right Understanding of *these*, that he had, while he remained a *Protestant*, for the right Understanding of the holy Scriptures.

Let it be further considered (and this, I should hope, with what has been said above, may effectually check the forward Inclination of any *Protestant* to turn *Papist*, for the Sake of gaining an *infallible*
Assistance

Assistance and Direction) that it may justly be doubted whether the *Roman Catholics* themselves (I mean, the learned and ruling Part of them) do, in their Consciences, believe, they have any such thing as *Infallibility* in their Church. I am sure, they act, on most Occasions, as if they had no such Belief. What, in the Name of Wonder, should make the Popes so horribly afraid, as they manifestly are, of *General Councils*, and so extremely loth to assemble them, and particularly, why was the calling of the Council of *Trent* put off with Excuses and affected Delays, by one Pope after another, for twenty-five Years together, if they did really believe there was such a thing as *Infallibility* amongst them? Were they afraid of the holy Spirit of *Infallibility*? Could that be a Terror to them? Had they so ill an Opinion of the Faith and Doctrine of the Church, as to suspect that the *Holy Ghost* would reprove and condemn it? Or did they not rather suspect that the *Holy Ghost* would not be amongst them, but that, being a Company of interested, passionate, weak, and fallible Men, they were very likely to run Riot upon it, and to throw down, at once, the goodly Fabrick, they had been, so many Ages, rearing up? That this was really the Case, any one must believe who considers the Manner, as well of the *Pope's*, as of the *Council's* acting, when they were, at last, called together. Why so many Tricks and Artifices of the *Popes* and their *Legates*, to manage the Spirits of these Fathers, if they had really considered them, as under an *infallible* Direction? There was no intriguing, none of the Arts and Policies of worldly

Wisdom, employed, in the first Council, held by the *Apostles*, at *Jerusalem*. Nor would his *Holiness* have thought there was any Occasion for them here, had he been really persuaded, that they, or he, or he and they together, could not have erred in any Determinations they should come to, touching the Faith. Nor would he have thought it necessary to pour in upon them, as he did, so large and disproportionate a Number of titular *Italian* Bishops, his own Creatures and Pensioners, to give their Voices (if they may be said to give what they are paid for) whereby he gained a Majority, and had every Thing carried to his liking. For how restive and refractory soever they might be for a Time, he was not ignorant, that, had they been under the Guidance of an infallible Spirit, their Minds, at last, and before they should come to frame their Decrees, would be, by his divine Power, over-ruled and changed, and that they must have decided, according to Truth, though his Slaves had stay'd, all, at home. And as to the *Fathers* of the *Council* themselves, they plainly appear to have had no great Opinion of their own *Infallibility*, or, at least, of the Sincerity of those of their own Church who seemed to believe it. Else, why so much Shiness and Artifice in drawing up so many of their *Canons*? Why so much Care to give them a double uncertain Meaning, that they might receive different Interpretations, and Men of contrary Opinions might have the Pleasure to believe, they had the Church on their Side? And indeed the general Resolution of the Council, pursuant to Cautions and Directions received from *Rome*, not

to meddle at all with such Controversies as depended between *Catholics*, or not to speak plainly upon them, is a plain Proof, that they put no Trust in their own People's Belief of their *Infallibility*, and were not insensible, that, were they to take upon them to decide such Points, the Party, whose Opinions should be condemned, would never submit to their Decisions, but still maintain their former Opinions, and, perhaps also, would make a Schism in the Church about them. So little Appearance is there, that either the *Pope* himself, or the *Fathers* in Council, or knowing *Catholics* without Doors, had, then, any firm Belief of the *Infallibility* of the Church. And there is, I am sure, little Appearance, that the knowing and ruling Part of the Church have, now, any other Sentiments of papal or council-*Infallibility*, than they formerly had.

The Case being so, and the *Infallibility* of the Church being so little believed, and regarded, by the most learned and discerning among themselves, you will, perhaps, wonder they should so earnestly contend for it, and so zealously propagate the Belief of it, amongst others. But the Mystery is not great: 'Tis no more than this; they would have it believed, because the Belief of it is *useful* to them, many Ways. For that is enough for a Church, which (as plainly appears from twenty Instances besides) does not consider the *Truth*, so much as the *Utility* of the Doctrines it professes. The Belief of *Infallibility* opens a Way for any *useful* and *gainful* Doctrine, Practice, or Worship, they shall, at any time, have a mind to bring into the Church,

and leaves them to do it, without Opposition or Contradiction. For let the Doctrine, Practice, or Worship be ever so strange, a good Catholic will only say—*The Church has decreed it—and the Church is infallible—that's enough for me.—I renounce my own Judgment to conform myself to that of the Church.* It saves also the People abundance of Trouble in examining the Doctrines and Practices of the Church; and it saves the Church the Hazard of their finding out, as they would probably do by a careful Examination, that those Doctrines and Practices are vain, without Foundation, or impious and detestable. By thus keeping them in Ignorance, and by pleasing them also, at the same time, with the Thought, that they are in the Bosom of a Church which has the rare and peculiar Privilege of *Infallibility* bestowed upon it, they keep them staunch and steddly to its Communion. And by blustering with it, when they get amongst *Protestants*, they, now and then, *bewitch a foolish Galatian*, and draw him over to them. Foolish indeed he must be, who will be persuaded to swallow so rank a Pretence, which has so little Appearance of Scripture-Proof to help it down, and almost turns the Stomachs even of those who administer it to them.

SECT. VII.

Shewing, that the Pretence of there being no Salvation but in the Communion of the Church of Rome is presumptuous, and without Foundation, and ought not, therefore, to move any Protestant to embrace that Communion.

WHEN once it is taken for certain, that the particular Church of *Rome*, and that only, has the Promise of a divine and infallible Assistance, and, by a peculiar Grace, is exempted from all Possibility of Error and Mistake, in such Matters of Faith, as shall be delivered and defined therein, it will be easy and natural to conclude, that it is so much the Duty of all *Christians* to keep in the Unity of this *infallible* Church, that they must *infallibly* be damn'd, if they depart from it. And, accordingly, it may be observed, that from the Time *that* Church has called itself the *infallible*, it has been the *damning* Church. It cannot be denied but it does confine Salvation to its own Communion. The Creed of Pope *Pius*, which is now the Standard of the *Roman Catholic* Faith and Religion, does confine it so. For, in that Creed, after the primitive Faith, contained in the *Nicene* Creed, which we, together with them, steadfastly believe, we have twelve new additional Articles, agreeable to the Doctrine of the *Trent Council*, concerning ecclesiastical Traditions, as a Rule of Faith, the seven Sacraments, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Transubstantiation, half Communion, the Veneration due to Images and Relicks, Purgatory, Prayer

Prayer for the Dead to deliver them out of it, with the Power of Indulgences, which they would make you believe was left by *Christ* to the Church, and are, (they pretend) in their Use, very beneficial to Christian People. And in the close of all, it is positively asserted, that “*this is the true Catholic Faith, without which no Man can be saved.*” Which is the same thing as saying, that no Man can be saved out of the Church of *Rome*, since *that* Faith is not professed in any other Church, but absolutely rejected and condemned, as *impious* and *heretical*, by all the Churches in the World besides.

If this Sentence had been placed immediately after the twelve Articles which make up the antient *Nicene Creed*, and had had Respect to those only who should deny or renounce the Faith which that Creed proposes to us, it might have been endured, and with the proper Limitations and Qualifications, which Declarations of that Sort are to be always understood with, would have been, perhaps, fairly defensible. For, *there*, we have the prime and fundamental Verities of the Christian Religion, which every one, of sufficient Capacity, to whom they have duly been made known, is obliged to believe. But to pass a Sentence of Damnation, however limited and qualified, upon all, who cannot believe and receive the twelve last Articles of this famous Creed, who (for Instance) cannot believe that Tradition is as safe a Rule of Faith, and *to be received with equal Veneration with the holy Scriptures*, or that, *in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, there is a real Conversion of the Bread and Wine into the*

*the true natural Body and Blood of Christ, or that in the Bread only, whole and entire Christ, and the true Sacrament is received, who don't hold the Sacraments of the Christian Religion to be just seven, neither more, nor less, who can't understand how it should be lawful to worship Saints and Angels, or the Images of the Saints, or who have no Faith in Purgatory, or the Suffrages of the Faithful to deliver Souls out of it, or who cannot conceive how Papal Indulgences can be any way beneficial to Christian People, in the next World,—to pass (I say) a condemnatory Sentence upon all who are not able to receive these, and some other Articles of the like Sort, is intolerable Presumption and Uncharitableness. If all the Assertions of this Part of the Creed had been real Verities, they would have been (or most of them, however, would have been) Verities of so low a Nature, and of so small Consequence, that it would have been too much, by a great deal, to denounce such a Sentence upon all who should not embrace and profess them. For what a scandalous Thing would it have been to pronounce, every one damn'd, who should not hold, that the Relicks of the Saints, the Handkerchief (suppose) of St. *Briget*, or St. *Catharine* (granting it to be the real Handkerchief of one of those Saints) was to be had in Veneration, or should be of Opinion, that no other Sort of Veneration is due to it, than to that of some other good Women, who have been famous in their Generations, altho' not numbered among the Saints. How scandalous (I say) and how ridiculous too, would it be, in a Creed, to damn every one who could not embrace*
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and profess so insignificant and unconcerning a Truth as this, (supposing it to be such) and some others of pretty near the same Consequence contained and proposed, or plainly imply'd, in the latter Part of that Pope's Creed. But when it is further considered, that these Assertions are not true, but manifestly false, great Corruptions of the Christian Religion, unheard and unthought of in the Church of God, and in the Church of *Rome* itself, till six, seven, or eight, and not, all of them, generally received, even there, till twelve or thirteen hundred Years after *Christ*, one cannot sufficiently admire the desperate Rashness of that Church, which is not afraid to pronounce the Damnation of Hell upon all who do not, without doubting, receive and profess them; that is, all the Christians, besides themselves, that are now in the World, all the primitive Church, and their own Church too, for the best Part of a thousand Years from the Foundation of it.

Perhaps, those who would pervert and seduce you, may either chuse, or happen, to place your Damnation, not so much to the Account of your not holding and embracing all the Articles of the *Trent-Creed*, as, of your not owning the Authority, and living in Obedience to the Pope, and See of *Rome*, according to that Decision of one of their Popes, *Boniface VIII. We declare, define, and pronounce, that no human Creature can be saved, who is not subject to the Bishop of Rome.* No human Creature! lest, peradventure, such human Creatures as the *Hotentots* should not be understood to be taken in. But I would fain know of any one,
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and desire the Reader of this will ask, in Case he meets with any Popish Missionary who shall ever attack him upon this Head, what Account he can give, upon that Supposition, of there not being, in the whole New Testament, any one Command or Precept to submit ourselves to him. We are often bid to be subject to the King, or to the higher Civil Powers, and to those in Authority *under* them: And we are frequently admonished, in general Terms, to obey and submit ourselves to those who watch for our Souls, but not a Syllable have we there, of submitting ourselves to *the great Bishop of Rome*, or universal Pastor of the Church. Is not this wonderful? For considering the vast Importance and universal Concern of this Duty, (if it be a Duty) one would rather expect to find an express Injunction, or some Intimation of it, in almost every Page, and that it would be as much inculcated in the *Canonical Epistles* of the Apostles, as it is in the *Decretal Epistles*, the *Bulls*, the *Breves*, or any of the Writings, or Instruments of the Popes. Nay, there is not so much as the Name of the *Pope*, or Bishop of *Rome*, in the whole Bible; and while it tells us a good deal concerning *Anti-Christ*, it says not one Word of the *Vicar of Christ*, to whom (be-like) *every human Creature* is obliged, at the Peril of his Salvation, to be subject.

He may ask further, if he pleases, whether all the Christians in the World were, or ought to have been subject to St. *Peter*, so long as he lived, and, after him, to his Successors in the See of *Rome*; whether, in particular, all the Apostles were
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made subject to him. I know, you will be told they were ; though without any Proof, and in Contradiction to the plainest and most invincible Proofs, in the holy Scriptures, of the contrary. And to tell you the Truth, if there was any such Thing as *a Primacy of Jurisdiction and Authority* in any one of the Apostles, in my Opinion, it may be claimed for *St. Paul* more plausibly, than for *St. Peter*, and particularly, upon the Strength of those Words of his, (to mention at present no other) *the Care of all the Churches*, 2 Cor. xi. 28. There are no Words in the Bible concerning *St. Peter* half so expressive of a supreme and universal Pastorship, as these, concerning *St. Paul*, are. And had it been said by *St. Peter* in one of his Epistles, that *the Care of all the Churches* lay daily upon him, how would the *Romanists* have boasted ! But, passing this by, go on with asking, if such of the Apostles as survived *St. Peter* were bound to be subject to his Successor. Was *St. John* (for Example) who lived many Years after the Martyrdom of that Apostle, was he bound to be subject to those who sat in the See of *Rome*, during his Life ? Is it credible, that the beloved Disciple, an Apostle and Evangelist, who was guided, by the Spirit of Truth, into all Truth, who was favoured with so many Revelations, and taught so many Things to come, is it credible that he, in his old Age, was brought down so low, as to have *Linus*, or *Clemens*, or *Cletus*, of whom we read Nothing concerning their being other than ordinary Pastors and Bishops of the Church, for his Sovereign ? Can it enter into the Heart of any Christian to believe,

lieve, that he was subject to these, or that he missed of Salvation, for not having been subject to them? Is there any Proof that *Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Cyprian*, and their respective Churches, were dependant upon the Bishop and Church of *Rome*? No; but if you were to look into their Writings, and the other Records of the Church, you would find that they considered him as no other than their Colleague, (and often call him so) and esteemed their Churches not as Daughters, but only as Sister-Churches to that of *Rome*, and owing no Kind of Subjection to it. And of the Truth of this you may be pretty well satisfied, without the Trouble of examining the Histories and Records of the antient Church, from the Confession of one, who was afterwards Pope, *Æneas Sylvius*, who frankly and ingenuously owns, that little Regard was had to the Church of *Rome*, till the Council of *Nice*, in the fourth Century; and with respect to Authority and Jurisdiction, he might have brought down his Observation some hundreds of Years lower. For about the Close of the sixth Century, we have another of their Popes, *Gregory the Great* (the last of the good Popes, and the first of the bad, as one calls him) affirming, “*that neither he, nor his Predecessors, in that See, had yet dared to assume the Character of Universal Bishop*; nor did they ever exercise the Power belonging to him. He vehemently exclaims against *John*, Patriarch of *Constantinople*, for having taken it upon him, not as belonging to *himself* (which ignorant *Roman Catholics* may, perhaps, fancy to be the Case) but, as being,

in itself, an intolerable and anti-christian Usurpation, though, 'tis true, his next Successor but one did assume it, and it has been maintained and kept up by all who have succeeded him, ever since. Was, then, the whole Church of God, the particular Diocese or Patriarchate of *Rome* only excepted, for the first six hundred Years, liable to Damnation, nay, certainly damned for not acknowledging the Supremacy of the Bishop of *Rome*, and not living in Subjection to him? Let any Priest say it, if he dare. And if *they* were safe *all this while*, 'tis hoped *we* may be so, *now*.

This, I should hope, may be sufficient to teach *you*, or any Protestant, to despise all the Threats and Denunciations of Damnation, with which the *Missionaries*, or others of that Church, may pursue him, for not believing and embracing all the Articles of the *Trent* Creed, or not living in external Communion with, and Subjection to the Pope. But for your further Satisfaction and Relief, you may please to consider, that the thundering out Damnation against all who are not in Communion with the Bishop and Church of *Rome*, we have Reason to believe is rather one of the *Policies* of that Church, or one of the Arts of its *Missionaries*, or at least, the Ebullition of a fiery Zeal in some forward Spirits, than the real Sentiments of the learned and ingenuous Part of them. Had you the Leisure, Opportunity, and Ability, to examine all the Writings of *Roman Catholics*, I could refer you to, you would find them discoursing concerning the Possibility of the Salvation of *Protestants*, or of those who are engaged in *Heresy* and *Schism* in
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the manner they suppose *Protestants* to be, in a quite different Strain, than your *Missionaries*, and other Zealots, talk of it. Father *Peter Walsh*, of the Order of *St. Francis*, is one of these; and in the Preface to his four Letters [d], he gives you the Names of several, and refers you to a Book of one of them, wherein many others are also mentioned, as in the same Sentiments with himself, in relation to such as we *Protestants* are accounted to be. And if so many of their Writers declared themselves, *then*, in these charitable Sentiments, how many thousands of their Priests and Monks, who were no Writers, (to say nothing of the Laity of that Communion,) may we fairly suppose there were, in the same Sentiments. And it is not likely that *now*, since the Encrease of Knowledge, their Notions should be grown more strait and rigid, but rather more softened and enlarged towards

[d] These are the Words of Father *Walsh*. "Whoever thinks I am singular in that Matter [*viz.* the Possibility of Salvation, at least to all those who out of pure invincible Ignorance either live or die in the external Communion of the *Protestant Church of England*] I refer him to *Franciscus a S. Clara's* Work, entitled, *Deus, Natura, Gratia*, and his 15th Problem there, which is, of *invincible Ignorance*, where he may see a very great Number of Roman Catholic Doctors, even *Scotus*, and *Vega*, and *Cor-duba*, and *Cajetan*, and *Azor*, and *Zanches*, and *Faber*, and *Vasques*, and *Valentin*, and *Angles*, besides many others, nay, the greatest Part of our Scholasticks, leading the Way before me, concurring in the same Doctrine (as to all who only are, according to the School-term, *materially* Schismatics or Here-ticks) and asserting that not only invincible Ignorance, but invincible Error, against the true Faith, or Church, does not exclude any from Salvation. He may see their Places and Words exactly quoted there. Yea, and he may see that very learned Man himself of the Roman Catholic Church *Franciscus a S. Clara*, following them, and positively declaring himself—even as to the particular Case of *England* by Name."

us, than they were before. I am informed by a Lady, that a Priest of good Character, in the midst of a Country, one of the most bigotted of all to the *Roman Catholic* Religion, falling into some Conversation with her, asked her, *if she was a Catholic*. And being answered she was not, but a Protestant of the Church of *England*, That (says he) *I apprehend, was the Fault of your Parents, more than yours. However, (continued he) if you take care to serve God faithfully in the way of your own Religion, you may assure yourself, you are very safe.* And I doubt not but he spake the inward Sense of many others, who don't chuse (for fear, perhaps of displeasing, and being ill-treated by their Superiors) to speak their Minds so freely, and to tell Truth so *impolitically*, as he ventured to do.

But besides the Judgment of so many of their Writers, and learned Men, for the Salvation of Protestants, we can produce that of some crowned Heads of the *Roman Catholic* Communion, in Favour of the same way of thinking. *Mary, Queen of Scots*, as her Son, King *James I.* informs us in his *Premonition to Christian Princes*, a little before her Execution, sent him a Message, "*That though she was of another Religion, than that wherein he was brought up, yet she would not press him to change, except his Conscience forced him to it, not doubting, but, if he led a good Life, and were careful to do Justice, and governed well, he would be in a good Case, in his own Religion.*" And if the noted Author of *The Case stated* is to be credited, King *James II.* how zealously soever he was bent upon introducing and propagating the *Roman Catholic* Religion

Religion in these Kingdoms, did not himself use any Endeavours, either before or after his being King, to reconcile his two Daughters to it, nor would allow a certain Zealot, who offered his Service for the Purpose, to make any Attempts upon them. *Let them alone* (said he) *they are so good, they will be saved in any Church.*

If this, then, be the Case, how easy will it be to return a clear and satisfactory Answer to that popular Argument of *Roman Catholics*, whereby they would persuade us that their Religion is the safer. You *Protestants* (say they) *universally* allow that a *Roman Catholic* may be saved; but we *all* deny, that a *Protestant* can. There is, therefore, the Judgment and Confession of *both* Sides, that we, in our Religion, may be safe; but not so, that you, in yours, may be. Whence it follows, that ours is the safest, and, in common Prudence, to be chosen. If we were to allow it true, that *all* *Roman Catholics* maintain the Impossibility of the Salvation of a *Protestant*, while *all* *Protestants* allow the Possibility of a *Roman Catholic's* Salvation, the Argument built thereupon is, nevertheless, weak and insufficient, as Archbishop Tillotson [e] (to say nothing of others) has plainly shewn. He observes, that this Argument is built upon a weak Principle, *viz.* that whatsoever different Parties in Religion agree in, *that* is safest to be chosen, which is not always true. For then it would follow, that it is best and safest to rest in *natural Religion*, which all agree to receive, and to forsake *Christianity*,

[e] In his Sermon on the Hazard of being saved in the Church of *Rome*.

which a great Part of the World rejects : — That 'tis always safest to be on the uncharitable Side, and, of two Religions, to chuse that which is most void of Charity, which for a Christian is an absurd thing to do : — That 'tis more prudent to trust your self in the Hands of a Mountebank, than of a regular and skilful Physician, if this be so modest, as only to say, that the Method prescribed by the *Mountebank* may possibly do the Work, though there be great Danger and Hazard in it, while the *Mountebank* confidently pronounces, that the Method which the *Physician* takes will certainly destroy you, but that his will *infallibly* work the Cure : — That though *Protestants* do generally acknowledge the Possibility of Salvation in the Church of *Rome*, they do, at the same time contend, there is a prodigious Hazard of being saved in it, especially, in respect of those, who, as you were, have been educated Protestants, and brought up in the Knowledge of the Truth, but shall apostatize from it, and go over to that corrupt Church. These Considerations, and divers others, which the Archbishop urges, in the Place I have referred you to, in the Margin, plainly shew the Weakness and Insufficiency of this Argument, even supposing it true (as his Grace, I confess, seems to do) that *all* Protestants grant a *Papist* may be saved, while *no* *Papist* grants that a *Protestant* can. But as this (universally speaking) is not true of either, it need not have been supposed. For as many, (we will say, if you please, *most*) of the *Papists*, either through *Policy* or *Bigotry*, will not allow a Possibility of Salvation to a *Protestant*, so there are, not

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a few,

a few, *Protestants*, who either through Zeal, or Ignorance, will scarcely allow there is any Hope of it, for a *Papist*. And, on the other hand, as all *judicious* and *sober* *Protestants* do own, that a *Papist* may be saved, so there is Reason to think that most of the *learned* and *ingenuous* *Papists* do inwardly believe, and, in proper Time and Place, will also own, that a *Protestant* may. They do indeed hold that we are all in *Herefy* and *Schism*. But then they distinguish between what is *Herefy* and *Schism* *materially* only, and what is *formally* so; and such of us as have been brought up, and go on, in the Profession and Practice of the *Protestant* Religion, in the Simplicity of our Hearts, and are inwardly disposed to receive the Truth, (or what they call Truth) when God shall reveal it to us, they do not seem to consider as *formal* Hereticks or Schismatics, and incapable of Salvation. And how little does this Way of thinking concerning us, how little (I say) does it differ, indeed nothing at all as far as I can perceive, from our Way of thinking concerning *them*. For *we* hold *them* to be in *Herefy* and *Schism*, as *they* do *us*: We hold *them* also to be in *Idolatry*, which sure is still worse. But, nevertheless, such of them as were born and bred in the midst of *Roman Catholic* Countries, have been, from their Cradles blinded and misled by their Priests, and never had the Opportunities of coming to the Knowledge of the Truth, but are, nevertheless, in the Disposition and Preparation of their Minds, ready to embrace it, when it shall please God to make it known to them, all these we hold to be in a salvable State, and humbly

hope God will extend his Salvation to. And so, upon the whole, I do not see but *Papists* and *Protestants* (taking in *Protestants* of all Sorts, hot and ignorant Zealots, as well as others) are *pretty near even* with one another, as to their Judgments concerning each other's Salvation. At least the Difference is not so great, as to afford a Foundation for the *popish* Argument that is built upon it. Perhaps, those who have handled this Argument against the *Papists* were not sufficiently apprized of there being so many, as I am apt to believe there are, among the learned in the Church of *Rome*, who think so favourably and charitably of our Salvation. But it seems more probable, they were willing to let it be thought true, that while *all* *Protestants* admit a *Papist* may be saved, no *Papist* admits that a *Protestant* can, knowing how easily they could expose the Weakness of the *popish* Arguings thereupon, and thinking, perhaps, that the Handle it gave them for extolling the Charity of *Protestants*, and exclaiming against the Uncharitableness of *Papists*, would disserve the Cause of *Popery*, more than so weak and childish an Argument could possibly serve it. But, in my Opinion, there was no need, for fear of depriving themselves of this Advantage, to omit or over-look a Consideration that is so important, and bids so fair for taking away the very Ground and Foundation which the Argument stands upon. For how favourable and charitable soever, in their private Sentiments concerning our Salvation, great Numbers of particular Persons in the Church of *Rome* may be found, 'tis plain enough, that *the Church itself*,

in the Creed before mentioned, and in such other Declarations of her Sense as she has any where made, touching this Matter, is as uncharitable as they suppose her to be, and does really, I believe, deserve the severest things they have said of her.

S E C T. VIII.

Shewing, that what Papists do sometimes pretend, that the Difference, between their Religion, and ours, is but small, is a bold and notorious Untruth; and though it were true, cannot be considered as a reasonable Motive to their turning Papists.

WHEN our *English popish* Missionaries come to perceive, that all the Prejudices they can suggest and insinuate against the *Protestant* Religion, and Church of *England*, have taken no Place, and wrought no Effect upon the Person whom they make their Attempts upon, but that the Thoughts of so mighty a Change, as they would persuade him to, are still shocking to him, the next thing is to make him believe, that the Change is nothing like what he takes it to be, that the Church of *England* and that of *Rome* are pretty well agreed, nay, that there is a wonderful Conformity between them. But this Assertion is so bold and impudent, and manifestly false, that a few Words will be sufficient to expose it.

It is very true indeed, the two Churches are pretty well agreed about the great Doctrines of the Christian Religion, contained in the Apostles and other antient Creeds; and so, perhaps, are all the

Churches in the World. But are they agreed so well about the Superstructure, the Hay and Stubble, which the Church of *Rome* has raised upon these antient Foundations? If you were to compare the *Canons* and *Decrees* of *Popish* Councils, those of *Basil*, *Constance*, and *Trent*, and the *Catechism* of the latter, with the *xxxix Articles*, the *Liturgy*, the *Constitutions* and *Canons*, and the *Homilies* of the Church of *England*, you would find an Agreement wonderful indeed, as wonderful as that of Light with Darkness, of *Christ* with *Belial*, or of one Part of a Contradiction with the other. The Church of *England* teaches that all saving Truth is contained in the Books of holy Scripture, and that whatever is not read there, nor can be proved thereby, is not to be received, as an Article of Faith: The Church of *Rome* holds, that some saving Truths are not contained in the written Books of Scripture, but in certain *Traditions* that are unwritten, and that these are to be received with the same Reverence with the Books of the Old and New Testament. The Church of *England* receives, as Canonical, all the Books of the Old Testament, and no other than were received, as such, in the *Jewish* Church; but the Church of *Rome* has added whole Books to them. The Church of *England* maintains the holy Scripture was designed to be read by, and is useful to all: The Church of *Rome* will not suffer the Vulgar to read it, as being a pernicious Book, and likely to do them great Hurt. The Church of *England* holds, that any Church, the Church of *Rome*, as well as another, may err, and that she has erred in many things: The Church

Church of *Rome*, that she neither *has*, nor *can* err in any *one* thing, relating to Faith and Manners. The Church of *England* believes, that the sacramental Bread and Wine remain after Consecration in their natural Substances: But the Church of *Rome*, that only the *Species* of Bread and Wine remain, and that the *Substance* of them is changed into the natural Body and Blood of *Christ*, which is, therefore, (they say) to be worshiped; and accordingly, they do worship it, which in the Judgment of the Church of *England*, is gross Idolatry. The Church of *England* maintains also, that as *Christ* instituted the Sacrament in both Kinds, so it ought to be administered in both, and that no Church has Power to alter the Institution, and deprive the People of either of them. But the Church of *Rome* pretends, she has a Power to alter it, and to deprive, if she pleases, the Lay-people, and Priests not officiating, of the Cup, and has, accordingly, decreed they shall not have it. The Church of *England* affirms, there are but two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper: The Church of *Rome*, that there are five more, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and extreme Unction. And while the former teaches, that the Sacraments confer Grace, only then when they are duly and worthily received, the latter teaches, that they confer it, if they are but received at all, whether duly and worthily, or not. The Purgatory of the Church of *Rome* is esteemed by the Church of *England* a *fond thing*, and *vainly invented*, and therefore the Prayers of the Faithful, and saying of Masses, to deliver Souls out of it, are looked upon

upon by her as profitable for nothing, besides gratifying the Avarice of the Priests. And the *Papal Indulgences* she esteems equally unprofitable, or profitable to those only who have the dispensing of them. The Church of *England* maintains, that we are to *worship the Lord our God, and to serve him only*, and does not fear to condemn, as idolatrous, the Invocation of Saints and Angels, defended and practised in the Church of *Rome*; nor will she excuse, from the same Censure, the Veneration that is decreed and paid, there, to the Images of the Saints. I am almost tired with putting down the Differences there are between the Churches, in Matters of Doctrine and Opinion only; and yet I have not put down half the Differences there are between us, even in *these* Matters. And when there are so many staring Differences between the two Churches, and those in Matters of the last Consequence, a Man must have a consummate Assurance who will venture to talk of a near Agreement, or Reconciliation between them; and 'tis an Affront to the Understanding of almost the meanest, and most illiterate *Protestant*, to go about to make him believe it.

In Matters of Church Government and Worship, they seem to pretend to some nearer Agreement with us, than in Points of Doctrine and Opinion. But what Agreement have *they* with *us*, even in these Matters? The Government of the Church appointed by the Apostles, we have happily preserved in its primitive and original State; and that is, by Bishops, supreme and independent in their several Districts. The Church of *Rome*

too has its Bishops. But what Sort of Bishops? Not such as they were in the Beginning, governing independently their own Dioceses, but absolutely subject to the Pope, and swearing Obedience to him, who treats them, therefore, as no better than his Curates, having no Jurisdiction but what he has been pleased to commit to them, and can take away from them, and has, by Privileges, Exemptions, Dispensations, Delegations, and sundry other ways, almost suspended them from the Office that is proper to them. Not to insist here upon the Opinion which generally prevails in the Church of *Rome* concerning Bishops, that they are not of *divine Institution*, as a different Order from that of Priests, but one and the same Order with it. [f]

[f] Left the Opinion here mentioned, as generally prevailing in the Church of *Rome*, (that *Episcopacy*, as an Order distinct from, and superior to that of *Priesthood*, is not of *divine Institution*) should stick in the Minds of some, or be made use of by others, as a Prejudice against the contrary Opinion maintained by the Church of *England*, it will be proper to observe, that it was introduced into the Church of *Rome*, in the later Ages, as most of the Sentiments and Doctrines of that Church were, for politick Reasons. In the primitive Church of *Rome*, as in other Churches, they were esteemed distinct Orders, one superior to the other. But when in Process of Time, the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* prevailed in it, and it was supposed, that every Priest had a Power, by Consecration, to convert the common Elements of Bread and Wine into the natural Body and Blood of *Christ*, some, in that Church, began to reason in this Manner,—*This is a wonderful Effect, and the producing of it must be, sure, the highest Act of Power that the Christian Ministry is capable of, and that, consequently, must be the highest Order of the Ministry, which is endowed with it.* From whence it was concluded, that *Bishops* did not differ from, nor were superior to, *Priests*, in Order, but in Degree only. One would hardly expect this way of Arguing should be relished by the Popes, because it will bring down them, as well as the other Bishops, to the Level of *Priesthood*. For what higher Power can they be endowed with, than that of *making God*? How-
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And as to Worship; they have Forms, and so, it is true, have we; but not in an unknown Tongue, nor stuffed with such a Multitude of odd, and whimsical, of dark, and ridiculous Ceremonies, that if those who are unlearned, or Unbelievers were to come in, while the Priest is saying some of his Offices, particularly Baptism and High-Mass, and were not sufficiently apprised that he was acting, in all he does, according to his Rule, they would certainly report he was mad.

But what are, then, perhaps you will say, the Articles, wherein the two Churches, or Religions, do agree; for, sure, there must be some, or they could never talk, as they do. Why, you have them drawn up in a popish Book, reprinted and published not many Years since, with this Title, *The Catholic Christian instructed*. There you will find the Points wherein we are pretended to be agreed: And they are, as I remember (besides the Points of *Episcopacy* and *Liturgy* before mentioned) these which follow;—*We have the same Churches which were built by our popish Ancestors, and dedicated to the Saints*. But the Idols, that stood there in the Days of our Popish Ancestors, are taken out, and instead of them, we have most commonly, certain Sentences of Scripture, and, among the rest, the second Commandment. — *We have Altars in our Churches, as they have*; yet not for the same

ever, the Opinion which it tended to establish [the Identity of Priests and Bishops] was always agreeable to them, and they have shewn themselves, upon all Occasions, favourable to it. For they wisely consider, that the Depression of Bishops must be their own Exaltation,

Purposes,

Purposes, not for the Use of a true propitiatory Sacrifice for the Living and the Dead, but for the Commemoration of a Sacrifice, once offered upon the Cross.—*We baptise, as they do, with the Sign of the Cross;* but we do not use it, as they do, on every common Occasion, as if we were every where, surrounded with Pagans who esteemed the Cross of Christ Foolishness, and held it in Derision. In such a Case (which indeed was the Case of the primitive Church) it would be, perhaps, more reasonable. Nor do we attribute to it any Virtue, or Power to confer Grace, when we do use it, in Baptism.—*We also use Godfathers and Godmothers;* that is, in a Matter that is merely prudential, we happen to think alike; but we happen to think very differently in the Point of baptising Bells with Godfathers and Godmothers, and esteem it no better than a horrible Profanation.—*We observe, too, Lents and Vigils:* That is to say, we have proper Seasons for Abstinence and Fasting, as our Lord has commanded. And 'tis a Wonder, it was not observed, as a farther Instance of our Agreement, that we have Times also for Eating and Drinking, as our Lord has permitted us to do.—*We, as well as they, have Churthing of Women, after Child-bearing;* which, to be sure, is a great Instance of our Popery, as plainly implying an Opinion, that when a Person has been delivered from some grievous Pain, or escaped some mighty Peril which threatned his Life, it is a decent and proper Thing to return solemn Thanks to Almighty God for the same.—*Some of our Lessons and Prayers* ('tis also said) *are borrowed from the Mass;* but we have none of their Legends among our Lessons,

Lessons [g], nor any of their Invocations of Saints and Angels, among our Prayers; and it would be very hard, if there were no Petitions, in the Mass, to the Lord our God, and such as might safely be used by us. *We have, lastly, the Consecration of Churches, as they also have.* We do, indeed, set them apart from all common Uses, for the Offices of Religion, by some decent Ceremonies, and the Solemnity of Prayer; but not with the Fopperies and Superstitions *they* do; nor do we conceive, that, by such Consecration, they acquire a Power to keep Devils at a Distance, or to produce any other Effects of a like nature. These are the Things wherein the Author of those *Instructions for Catholic Christians*, sets us forth as agreeing with the Church of *Rome*; nor is our Agreement, even in these Things, full and exact: We only agree in the *Things*, leaving to themselves the *Excesses*, the *Superstitions*, and *Corruptions*, with which they observe and practise them. And are we to be invited into the Church of *Rome*, upon account of our Agreement (so far as we do agree) in these common Things, notwithstanding the irreconcilable Difference between us, in the great Points before mentioned? This is, as if the Wolf were to say to the Lamb, or the Leopard to the Kid, “*Why keep you, my Friend, at such a Distance from us? Are not you four footed Animals, as we are? Do ye not eat, and drink, and*

[g] When Cardinal *Quignonius*, by Direction from Pope *Paul III.* reformed the *Breviary*, he put in, for *Lessons*, some Portions of holy *Scripture*, instead of *Legends*: but *Pius V.* undertaking to reform it afterwards prohibited, that of *Quignonius*, and putting out the *Scriptures*, restored the *Legends* again.

sometimes sleep, as we also do? From hence it is plain, that you, and we are much of a kind, and nothing, methinks, need hinder your coming amongst us, feeding, and lying down, and dwelling with us."

By this Time, I hope, we see; there are many Differences, and those very material, indeed of the last Consequence, between the *Roman Catholic Religion*, and that of the *Church of England*. And I shall now only add, that though it were as manifestly, and notoriously true, as it is false, that there was no material Difference between them, it would be an improper, and even absurd thing, to be urged on their Side, to induce one of us of the *Church of England* to relinquish his own, for the *Roman Catholic Religion*. If the Difference is really so small between his present Religion, and that they would bring him over to, why, for God's Sake, so much Pains, to convert him to it? Or why should he think of exchanging the Religion he now professes? Is it a reasonable thing to forsake a Religion *by Law established*, and to betake himself to one, *so nearly the same*, which, nevertheless, is made criminal by the Laws of his Country, and may happen, at one Time or other, to expose him to the Lash of them, and involve him in divers Inconveniences besides? Or, to argue this Point upon Christian Principles, will it become him as a Member of *Christ's Catholic Church*, to renounce the Religion which is, generally, and so well nigh universally, received, professed, and practised in the Nation, and which he himself is very well satisfied withal, to enter into a darkling dissenting Sect, (for, in my Opinion, *English Roman Catholics* can be,

be, and should be no otherwise considered) a Sect, which sets up against it, and is incessantly labouring to destroy it. This is not the Way to *catholic Communion*, which *Papists* talk of so much. But the Way to it, is, to continue conformable to the general Religion of his Country, if he be satisfied therewith, or to fall in with it, if it differs so little from his own, as that his Conscience will have no Concern in the Change. And upon this Principle, a Church of *England* Man may much more reasonably use the Argument, from the supposed near Agreement of the two Churches, to urge the *Missionary*, or whoever shall attack him, with it, to come over to *our* Church, than *he* can, to urge *him* to go over to *theirs*.—I think, Sir, you say, (he may retort upon him) there is so near an Agreement between the two Churches, that the Transition from the one to the other would be very easy, and it would not be so mighty a Change as I seem to apprehend it would, if I were to pass over to you. I have, I confess, some little Doubt of what you say about the Agreement of the Churches. For, were they so well, or so nearly, agreed, as you would have me believe, I think you would have left me to myself, and not have shewn so much Ardor, as you have done, to make me your Convert. But supposing it true, would not your coming over to *our* Church be as easy, as my going over to *yours*? And give me Leave to say, it would be a good deal more reasonable. My Situation, as I am of the national and established Religion, and have the Laws of the Land on my Side, is easy to me. But yours, the Laws
being

being against you, I have heard many of you say, is uneasy, and hazardous. And besides, (which is a Consideration of yet greater Weight with a good Christian) your complying with the Religion of your Country (which you will please to remember, you can easily do, as it differs so little from your own) will shew, you have some Regard to the Peace and Unity of God's Church, and take no Pleasure in making Divisions in it."—It is not to be expected, that turning his Argument upon himself, in this Manner, will have any Effect, to convert him, because the Foundation it is built upon, [the near Agreement of the two Churches] though he would have willingly imposed the Belief of it upon the *Protestant*, is what he does not believe himself, but very well knows to be an absolute Untruth. Yet, tho' it will not convert, it will confound, and stop the Mouth of the most subtle, or the most able, *Missionary* amongst them.

C H A P. III.

Protestant Objections against the Church of Rome and Roman Catholic Religion shewn to be just and well-grounded.

S E C T. I.

Shewing, that the cherishing of Superstition, as the Church of Rome does, is a reasonable Objection against it, and may justly alienate the Minds of Men from it.

Superstition is a thing much talk'd of, but not so well understood. It consists in placing Religion

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ligion in Things wherein Religion is not concerned ; as when a Man is afraid he shall offend God by such things as are no way offensive, or hopes he shall please him, by such things as are no way pleasing, and acceptable to him ; or when he expects from them such spiritual and gracious Effects as they are altogether incapable of producing. This being the Nature of *Superstition*, 'tis evident that it not only hurts the Credit of Religion, by making it appear in an odious, or contemptible Light, and exposing it to the disdainful Sneers of Atheists and Infidels, or the ridiculous Laughter of profane Wits, but is also a great Prejudice and Hindrance to the Practice of it, by causing Men to live in the Neglect of those things wherein it mainly consists, and which their Salvation depends upon, and to trust to such things as have no Connection with, or Relation to, nor any way *accompany* Salvation. And, therefore, it is justly esteemed a great Disparagement to any Church, when the Members of it are observed to be very *superstitious*. But when it is plainly seen, that the Church itself cherishes and encourages, takes abundance of Pains to inspire into, and industriously promotes *Superstition* among its Members, you may be sure she has Occasion for it, and is carrying on some corrupt and wicked Designs, by the Help of it.

There being in all Mankind a great Propensity to *Superstition*, (for they find it much easier to please God by a few outward trifling Performances, than by a Life of real and universal Holiness) no Wonder, if something of it, more or less, should be found in all Churches, even where (as in the Church

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Church of *England*) the utmost Care is taken to prevent it. But no Christian Church is over-run with it, like the Church of *Rome*; tho', 'tis true, too, it does not shew itself alike, in all the Parts of it. Your *Roman Catholics* here in *England*, and other *Protestant* Countries, are under some Restraint; and the publick Display of all their *Superstitions* would not be endured. And even in *France* and *Germany*, where *Papists* and *Protestants* are intermixed, and *Popery*, by that Means, is something lowered and diluted with *Protestancy*, *Superstition* is not quite so rampant, and barefaced, as in *Spain*, and *Portugal*, and *Italy*, where the true genuine old *Popery* reigns and triumphs, and no *Protestant* Drolls are to be met with, to laugh, and jeer, to make them ashamed of their Fooleries, and turn them to the Confusion of their Church. Here, *Superstition* has not only an unbounded Scope given to it, but is as carefully cultivated, as if it was thought, the Felicity and Glory of their Church depended upon the Growth and Thrift of it.

Whatever *superstitious* Practices and Conceits may be found (as some perhaps may) amongst the particular Members of *our* Church, the Church it self is free, and no way accountable for them, having not only guarded, with all possible Care, against them, in her *Liturgy*, her *Homilies*, her *Canons*, and *Constitutions*, but it being also notorious, and what all our People are able to testify, that the Clergy, both in their printed Books, and in their publick Instructions from the Pulpit, are never wanting, on proper Occasions, to warn Men against them, to

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expose the Folly, and set forth the Dangers and Mischiefs of them. There is, indeed, scarcely any thing prescribed and enjoined in our Church, which is liable to, or so much as capable of breeding in the Minds of Men any *superstitious* Imaginations, unless, perchance it should be the Sign of the Cross after Baptism. But then, she has largely explained, in her thirtieth Canon, the *lawful Use*, and shewn in what Manner she would have her People conceive, of it, lest any of them, through Ignorance or Prejudice, should happen to fall into fond and *superstitious* Thoughts concerning the Power of it. And accordingly, I am satisfied, there are few, or none, of its Members who think otherwise than she directs them to think of it, or consider it as any thing more than an *honourable Badge* of their Profession, an open Signification to the World that they do actually profess the Faith of a crucified Saviour, and as a Token to put them in Remembrance, that they ought not to be ashamed of that Profession. But Things are quite otherwise in the Church of *Rome*, where there are numberless Rites, which in their Natures, cannot be serviceable, or applicable, nor were ever intended, by the Church, to be applied to any other than *superstitious* Purposes; and, again, others, which, though they might have been used to reasonable and laudable Purposes, have, nevertheless, as well in the Sense of the Church, as in the Opinions of the People, some unaccountable Powers and Virtues superstitiously ascribed to them. And as if the Church was afraid the People should not observe the *Superstition* which she intends to inculcate

cate by those Rites, she always takes care in her publick Forms, to suggest and point it out to them, as any one may see, who will peruse the *Roman Pontifical*, the *Missals*, and *Breviaries*, and other approved Offices of the Church.

I should be too tedious, if I were only to reckon up the several *Superstitions* of that Church, but should never make an end, if I were to go about to give you any thing like a full View of only one half of them; their *Superstitions* (for Example) in the Matter of Fasting, of Penance, of Pilgrimages, and Processions, of their Exorcisms, and of their Consecrations. I will therefore keep to the last of these: And passing by, too, their Consecration of Crosses, Images, Altars, Habits, Salt, Oil, Candles, Vessels, *Agnus Dei's*, and twenty other Things of the like Nature, I will confine myself to the Consecration of Churches, Holy Water, and Bells; and from the Folly and Superstition of these Consecrations you may judge, as from a Sample, of the other, which I have but barely, or not at all, mentioned.

We of the Church of *England*, as is very well known, have nothing to object to the *Consecration* or *Dedication* of Churches, as that signifies barely the setting them apart from all common Uses, for the Performance of divine Offices, by certain solemn Ceremonies, and Prayers. The bare Use of some Ceremonies, which are natural and suited to the Occasion, is not the Thing we charge with *Superstition*. But 'tis using them with an Opinion, that Churches and Chapels gain thereby certain Privileges, Virtues, and Powers, and particularly

a Power to put Devils to Flight, so as never, afterwards, to enter or approach them, which is notoriously and confessedly the Sense and Belief of the Church of *Rome*. Is it that they flee from Churches thus consecrated, because they fear to approach them? Or do they do it, because, being Enemies to all Righteousness and Godliness, they know not how to endure the Sight of such Places, as are so set apart for our Instruction in Righteousness and Godliness, and the Exercise thereof? If this be the Case, there will be, 'tis hoped, no Place for these wicked Spirits in large and populous Cities, where there are Churches and Chapels so many, that they cannot help having some or other of them always in their Sight. Especially, as they are justly supposed (from *Eph.* ii. 2. and vi. 12.) to have their chief Station in the Regions of the Air, where, by the Advantage of their Elevation, they can hardly avoid seeing all the Churches at once, both of the City, and Country round about. One can hardly forbear running out into a little Raillery upon so wild and ridiculous a Superstition. But to argue the Point more seriously. What Ground have the *Romanists* to suppose, that *Demons* are forced to retreat, and keep at a Distance, from all consecrated Places? Is it a Tradition from the Apostles? To whom did they deliver it? And thro' what Hands has it been conveyed down to us? Or is there any Place in the Old, or New Testament, from whence one may draw such a Conclusion? The *Romanists*, I believe, will be hard put to it, to produce any such. But, I think, I have one to produce, that shews the contrary. The Devil,
failing

falling in his first Temptation of our Saviour, assaults him a second Time ; in order to which, *he taketh him* (says St. *Matth.* iv. 5.) *into the holy City, and setteth him on a Pinnacle of the Temple*, which, yet, 'tis presumed had been consecrated, and was, then, 'tis certain, the most holy Place upon the Face of the Earth. And 'tis a further Objection against this Superstition, that 'tis not of a Piece, and does not consist, mighty well, with some of the other superstitious Conceits they have about him. For if he *cannot*, or *will not* come nigh any Church, after Consecration, what Occasion, for God's Sake, can there be for those *Exorcisms* which are wont to be performed in the Churches ? On some great Occasions, we are told, [*b*] there is a Concourse of Persons, supposed to be possessed with evil Spirits, to their Churches, where the Priests, with their *Exorcisms*, pretend to cast them out. They also *exorcise* them out of the Bodies of Infants, when they are brought to Church, to receive Baptism. Now if it were certain, that the Consecration of the Church itself will keep them off, there would be, methinks, no Need of any *Exorcisms*, to force them out of the Persons who resort, or are carried thither, but they *must*, or *would* leave them of their own Accords, before they entred those Places ; and so the Priests might save their Breath, and spare their *Sufflations*, Boxings, Crossings, and other Ceremonies, to get them out. Neither does this Conceit match better with their common Practice of besprinkling them-

[*b*] *Emilliane's Frauds of Romish Monks*, v. i. p. 367.

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selves with *Holy Water*, when they enter their Churches. For if this be done, as 'tis supposed, to secure and fortify themselves against the Assaults and Illusions of wicked Spirits, it would be more rational to let it alone when they enter their Churches where there is no Danger of their Incur-sions, and to do it, when they depart, and are going abroad in the World. What think you now? These Things do not seem to me to hang well together.

There is not less, but indeed more *Superstition* in the *Consecration* of this same *Holy Water*, of which I have been speaking, than in the *Consecra-tion* of their Churches. For they attribute to *that* more Virtues and Powers, and with less Shew and Semblance of Reason, than to their Churches, when consecrated; not only a Power to put Devils to Flight, which the Churches are supposed to have, but also a Power to blot out Sins, all Sins of the *venial* Kind, to procure the constant Presence of the *Holy Ghost*, the divine Blessing, and indeed a Security from all Evil. For so says the *Roman Pontifical*. The Rise of this Custom of consecrating and be-sprinkling with *Holy Water* is ascribed, by some of the *Romish* Historians, to a Decree of Pope *Alexander I.* about the Beginning of the second Cen-tury. But the Bishops of *Rome*, at that Time, were better employed, than in devising such un-profitable and superstitious Rites. Nor do we hear of it in the Church, for many Centuries after. And though some of the Fathers have been quoted, by the Writers of the *Roman Church*, as speaking of *consecrated Water*, they mean only the *Water of Baptism*,

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Baptism, as will plainly appear to any one who examines the several Passages they produce. Indeed, it was not a Christian Invention at all, but transplanted from *Paganism*, as many other Rites of the *Roman Church* have been; and that, in the later Ages, as the learned know. But as to the Thing itself,—What Authority, I would know, has the Church of *Rome* for attributing to *Water, consecrated and blessed by a Priest*, the Powers abovementioned? *A Security from all Evil!* what! from Pestilence, Sword and Famine, from Fires, Earthquakes, and Inundations, from Loss of Goods, and Loss of Credit, from Fevers, Poisons, and broken Bones! 'Tis a wonderful Privilege to be bestowed by a simple Priest, upon the simple *Creatures* of Salt and Water! And then, for *the Pardon of venial Sins*, and *obtaining the constant Presence of the Holy Ghost*, who gave the Priest Power to dispense these by the Use of any other than the *baptismal Water*? That is indeed sanctified by Prayer to *the mystical washing away of Sin*, and communicating *the Fullness of the divine Grace*. But it is sanctified and made effectual to these Purposes, by a divine Institution and Appointment. And if it was not for *that*, it would be justly esteemed as great and dangerous a *Superstition*, and the Devil would *love it*, as well as he does *Holy Water*. For notwithstanding the old Popish nonsensical Proverb, I have no doubt, but (without an Irony) he loves it *very well*, and *has Pleasure in it*.

And now, a Word or two of the *Consecration, or Baptism of Bells*; for so it is called by some of
their

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 their own Writers; and not improperly, as you
 will perceive from the following Relation which I
 shall give you from one [i] who was once himself
 a Member of the Church of *Rome*, and a *Jesuit*
 too, till the *Superstitions, Corruptions, and Impos-*
tures of that Church had made him sick of it, and
 quite alienated his Mind from it.—“ Coming in
 “ his Journey (he tells you) to *Veletre* a City in
 “ the *Papacy*, his Host asked him, if he had
 “ not a mind to see the Ceremony, which was to
 “ be celebrated the next Day, in the Cathedral
 “ Church there. He told him, there was a great
 “ Bell to be *baptised*, whereof a great Lord was
 “ to be the *Godfather*, and a Lady of Quality the
 “ *Godmother*, and that there would be a great
 “ Appearance of the Nobility from all Parts. Be-
 “ fore this, he had seen Bells baptised in *France*,
 “ yet knowing (he says) that the *Italians* exceed
 “ all Nations in the Magnificence of their Cere-
 “ monies, and that they commonly season them
 “ with a double Proportion of Superstition, he resol-
 “ ved to see it. About Ten o’Clock next Morning,
 “ the Business came on, when, the Company be-
 “ ing seated, the officiating Bishop, in his Chair,
 “ placed upon the Steps of the high Altar, erected
 “ for the Purpose, struck up the Psalms which were
 “ continued by the Musick, the same Psalms which
 “ are to be seen in the *Roman Ritual*. These being
 “ ended, he began the *Blessing* of *holy Water*, to
 “ sanctify *that* whereby the *Bell* was afterwards to
 “ be sanctified. This finished, the Bishop and
 “ Priests dip Sponges in the Water, with which

[i] *Gabriel d’Emilliane*, *Frauds of Romish Monks and Priests*,
 Vol. ii. p. 71. “ they

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“ they rub the Bell all over, within and without,
“ being, in this Respect, (as he observes) better
“ baptised than Children are used to be. In the
“ mean time, Abundance of Prayers are repeated,
“ particularly, *that God would be pleased to rinse,*
“ *purify, sanctify, and consecrate this Bell with his*
“ *heavenly Benediction.* The Bell being thus well
“ washed, they dry’d it with clean Napkins; and
“ the Bishop taking holy Oil, therewith anointed
“ the Cross of Metal, which is at the Top of the
“ Bell, in order to make the Devil flee at the
“ Ringing of it, *that hearing this Bell, he may*
“ *tremble and flee before the Banner of the Cross*
“ *design’d upon it.* And after having made seven
“ Crosses with the said Oil, on the Outside of the
“ Bell, and four on the Inside, he caused the God-
“ father and Godmother to draw near, and then
“ demanded of them in *Italian, whether the Me-*
“ *tal of the Bell, and the Workmanship of it, had*
“ *been paid for to the Artificers? Whether they be-*
“ *lieved all that the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman*
“ *Church believes, concerning the Holiness and Vir-*
“ *tue of Bells?* To which Questions they answered
“ affirmatively. Then he demanded, *what Name*
“ *they desired should be put upon the Bell?* To which
“ the Lady answered, *Mary.* After this, the
“ Words of Consecration were pronounced by the
“ Bishop. *Let this Sign* (meaning the Bell) *be*
“ *consecrated and sanctified, in the Name of the Fa-*
“ *ther, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.* Then he
“ took the Censer, and censured it on the Outside
“ round about, and afterwards putting the Censer
“ under the Bell, he filled it with sacred Fumes,
“ repeating,

“ repeating, all the while, Prayers and Invoca-
 “ tions, that it might be filled with the Dew of
 “ the Holy Spirit. *Do thou all besprinkle this Bell*
 “ *with the Dew of the Holy Spirit, that, at the*
 “ *Sound of it, the Enemy of all Good may always*
 “ *take his Flight.* Then to shut up the Ceremony,
 “ he arrayed the Bell with the white Robe of a
 “ Profelyte or Convert, and read the Gospel of
 “ *Mary and Martha.* The Solemnity thus ended,
 “ the Bishop gave his Benediction, and the Priests
 “ received great Presents from the *Godfather* and
 “ *Godmother.*” Horrible Profanation! Shameful
 Prostitution of the sacred Rites of Christian Bap-
 tism, to pitiful insensible Things! What can be
 said in Defence, or Mitigation of it?

It is indeed pretended, in Defence of this *Super-
 stition*, that all this is only to give the Bell a Name,
 as we ourselves do to Ships, before they are launch-
 ed, and put out to Sea. And if it was really no
 more, I would only call it an Impertinence, the
 giving it a Name being of no Use, nor serving to
 any necessary Purpose, as the giving of Names to
 our Ships does. And if that was all the Matter,
 methinks it might be done, if it must be done, by
 the Bell-founder only, with some of the Populace
 about him; and there would be no need to inter-
 est the Church in such a paultry Affair, and to
 call in the Bishop, with his Priests, to perform
 the Solemnity, with Prayers, and Invocations,
 Psalms, and Lessons, in this Case, more than *we*
 do, in the other. If this was all, what Occasion
 for Crossings, and Fumigations, for washing the
 Bell all over with consecrated Water, for clothing
 it

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it with a white Robe, in plain Conformity to the primitive Practice of cloathing baptised Persons with white Garments, in token of the unspotted Innocence they were now privileged and endowed withal, and were bound to preserve, and bring with them, before the Tribunal of *Christ*. What Occasion for *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*, and their being called upon to declare their Belief, according to the Sense of the holy Catholick *Roman* Church, concerning the Holiness, and Virtue of Bells? And why are they to be consecrated and sanctified *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*? Can any thing now be plainer, than that the Church intends it for a Baptism; and if some *Roman Catholics* have seemed loth to admit this, 'tis only because they are sensible, nothing can be said in the Defence of it, as such, and are really ashamed of the Folly and Impiety of their own Church.

Nor is the Superstition of this Solemnity less apparent, than the Folly and Impiety of it. For according to *Durandus* [k], and the publick Offices of the Church, (which he has given us, as he called it, the *Rationale*, but 'tis rather the *Mythology*, of) all this is done, to impart, to the Bell, a Virtue, or Power, by its Touch or Sound, to increase Devotion in the People, to preserve the Fruits of the Earth, to keep the Minds and Bodies of Men in perfect Health and Soundness, to still the Winds, to disperse Storms and Tempests, to assuage the Violence of Thunder and Lightning,

[k] Rational. divin. Offic. l. i. c. 4.

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and to prevent the direful Effects of them, and (which is, it seems, the constant Effect of all consecrated Things) to keep the Devil, and his Angels, at due Distance. This is a great deal more than the simple Bishop of *Nola*, who invented Bells, or first apply'd them to Church Uses, had any Thought of. They are, without Question, an useful Invention to call the People to Prayers and Sacraments, and to give proper Notices of other Things of Consequence. This is all he intended, and 'tis all they are good for. But if they are really good for the Increase of our Faith, and heightning our Devotion, for keeping our Minds in Soundness, and our Bodies in Health, and preserving the Fruits of the Earth to our Use and Comfort, those, I guess, which are unblest and unbaptised will have these Effects, as well as those that are baptised and blessed with the greatest Solemnity.

As for their asswaging the Fury of Winds, of Thunder, and Lightning, and other Tempests, 'tis not unlikely that this may be sometimes done in a natural Way, by a Repercussion and Agitation of the Air, occasioned by the ringing of them. And I dare say, that *Protestant* Bells, hung up just as they came from the Foundery, without any Crossings, Anointings, Baptisings, or Gossipings, bestowed upon them, will do all this, as well as *Mary of Veletre*, or any other Bells, about which the same Pother may have been made. But the *Papists* have other Conceptions of this Matter, and, in their Account, all the Power which Bells are supposed to have to disperse Storms and Tempests is given to them in their Baptism; and they do

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it in a Way that is supernatural, by obliging wicked Spirits to sheer off, to cease from troubling, and raising Commotions amongst the airy, fiery, or watery Compositions, with which the Atmosphere is impregnated. This Account the Author just before mentioned gives us of it. “ *The Church* (says he) *whenever she perceives a Storm rising, sets her Bells a ringing, that the Devils hearing the Trumpets of the eternal King, (for such, belike, are the Bells, and, therefore, the Ringers, sure, must be his Trumpeters) may be terrified, leave off stirring up the Tempest, and betake themselves to Flight, as a Tyrant will do, as soon as he perceives, by the Sound of Drums and Trumpets, some powerful King, his Enemy, approaching.*” Is not this now a mighty Theological, as well as rational Account of the rising and ceasing of Storms and Tempests? Here, we have the Devil represented, as governing, not by special Permission, as in the Case of Job, but by an ordinary Power and Right, the natural World, at least, a considerable Part of it, which the holy Scripture always represents as an Act of divine Providence. He is represented, as *making the Thunder*, while the Psalmist expressly says, *God maketh it*, and calls it *his Voice*, Psalm xxix. 3, 4. Here we may see, not Mr. Addison’s Angel, performing the Orders of the Almighty, but the Dragon, the old Serpent, which is the Devil and Satan,

Ride in the Whirl-wind, and direct the Storm.

But the Bell tinkling, he fleeth away, and the Storm ceaseth. Though, ’tis true, it is often seen, that, taking Courage, he driveth the Tempest full

against the Turret wherein the Bell hangeth, and bringeth it to the Ground. Nor is the Bell itself secure from the Fierceness of his Lightning, but vilely melted down, *as though it was not anointed with Oil*, as though it had had neither *Godfather* nor *Godmother* to guard it against the Assaults of the Adversary, and as though the *Bishop and his Clerks* had never bestowed one *Benediction*, or one *Crossing*, or one single Drop of *Holy Water*, upon it.

S E C T. II.

Shewing that the Fanaticism of the Church of Rome is a just Objection against it.

THERE cannot well be a worse, or more suspicious Character of any Church, than that of *Enthusiasm*, or *Fanaticism*. *Fanaticism* in any *Person*, consists, and is to be seen, in his giving himself up to some irrational Acts and extravagant Flights of Devotion, or else, in a strong, but groundless, and unreasonable Persuasion, of his being assisted, in an extraordinary Manner, by the Spirit of God, and particularly, of his receiving, from this holy Spirit, supernatural Illuminations, and being governed by Impulses and Instigations, from him, in every thing he does. But considered as the Character of a *Church*, it is an Easiness and Proneness to believe, to countenance, and encourage all such Pretences. And this Character, I think, belongs to the Church of *Rome*, in so peculiar a Manner as to no other in the World.

In the first Place, she encourages an irrational Devotion. For though she is content, that her
Members

Members should live, if they like it, without any Devotion at all, as her imposing upon them such Prayers as few among them understand, and her suffering them to be taught, that it is sufficient barely to be present at them, plainly shew [1], yet, if any of them shall be disposed, as some Persons complexionally are, to a fervent and lively Devotion, and, in the Exercise of it, shall run themselves into all the Follies and Extravagances imaginable, she is content too. Not the least Check will she ever be seen to give to these Extravagances, but rather affords them all the Scope and Encouragement that is possible.

The *Protestant* Churches recommend to their Members, Meditation, and Prayer, publick and private Prayer, mental Prayer as well as vocal, and both of them fervent and affectionate, which one would think is as much as any Church need to do. But in the *Roman* Church, there is another kind of Prayer, highly magnified and applauded, called *the Prayer of Contemplation*. I shall not go about to describe or explain it to you, by any Words of my own, because, in plain Truth, I am not able, having no true Notion, and scarcely indeed any kind of Conception of the Thing. Nor can I imagine how it is possible for those who pretend to the Practice of it, to explain and instruct others in it, because, according to themselves, it never comes on, and commences, till the Mind is perfectly *quiescent*, till there is an absolute Cessation of all the Acts and Operations of it, and not the least Use of *Ratiocination* and

[1] See Ch. ii. Sect. 4.

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Memory; at which Time, the Soul, it seems, becomes passively united to the Substance of God, and profoundly ingulphed in him. This, I confess, appears to me profound and inexplicable Nonsense, as well as arrant *Entbusiasm*. And indeed, there is scarcely any thing extravagant and irrational in the Business of Devotion, but it is highly approved, commended, and extolled in that Communion, as there is nothing can be told, in relation to that Subject, so ridiculous and incredible, and in the Nature of Things, so impossible to be done, but it finds there an easy Reception and Belief. Thus *Ignatius Loyola* would often pray aloud, and sing Psalms, as he passed through the Streets, or on the high Ways, and kept daily upon his Knees for no less than seven whole Hours together. *St. Francis of Assise* did almost nothing but pray. And this we are told by the grave Writers of their Lives, without the least Blame, or Disapprobation of their indiscreet and irrational Devotion, but with a View of advancing thereby the Honour and Glory of those Saints. In like Manner we are told, with great Gravity and sober Sadness, of *St. Benedict* and his Sister *Scholastica*, that they prayed and sang Psalms, very distinctly, in their Mother's Womb; that *St. Brigit*, and *St. Ignatius* also before mentioned, were often, in Prayer, under such Extacies and Raptures, as raised their Bodies from the Ground, and made them hang, for some Time, pendulous in the Air. A Writer, if he stands upon his Credit with none but of that Communion, need not fear telling such Stories as these. His Judgment and Discretion will never be called
in

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in Question, upon Account of them. They will go down very well, and be easily digested, in any Country of that Communion, more especially at *Rome*. These are, *there*, great Advantages to the Character of any Person, will gain him the Reputation of extraordinary Sanctity, and together with other Things of the like Nature were the very Grounds even of the *Canonization* of *St. Benedict*, of *St. Ignatius*, of *St. Brigit*, and of forty more.

But the Church of *Rome* encourages and promotes not only an indiscreet and irrational Devotion, but also (what, perhaps, may be more properly called *Enthusiasm*, but is, to be sure, a more pernicious Sort of it) it encourages (I say) the most groundless Pretences to immediate Inspiration, an extraordinary Guidance, Assistance, and Illumination of the Holy Ghost. The Pretence of that Church to *Infallibility* appears to me no better than an *enthusiastical* Pretence. For I do not see which Way it can be explained and accounted for, without supposing the Persons, whom they esteem *infallible*, to be illuminated and assisted, in some extraordinary Manner, beyond what is vouchsafed to others, Especially, considering the Characters of many of them, and how ill qualified they are, from any rational Inquiries of their own, to make a solid and well-grounded Judgment, and much less an infallible Decision and Determination, touching so many arduous and sublime Points of Religion, as may happen to come before them. Supposing the *Infallibility* to reside (as some of your *Papists* hold it does) in the single Person of the Pope, is it conceivable that such wicked Popes, as

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many of them are confessed to have been, should have an unerring Judgment in divine Things, and be incapable of making any one wrong Determination concerning them, unless they were under some such Influence and Inspiration as *Balaam* was. Or can we imagine how a Pope, so extremely ignorant of all *Theological* Matters, as some of the Popes plainly were, should never err, or be so much as liable to err, in his Definitions concerning the deepest, and most abstruse Points in Divinity, unless under the Influence and Direction of such a divine Power as the *Ass* was, when he *re-buked the Madness of the Prophet*. Or, supposing *Infallibility* to be lodged in a General Council, or what they account such, (as other *Roman Catholics* maintain) yet, if that Council be packed by the Pope, and entirely at his Devotion, if nothing can be discussed there but what he, or his Legates shall propose, nor any thing defined but what he shall direct and prescribe, and will be pleasing to him, (which every body knows was the Management at *Trent*) how little is the Case altered? And though it were ever so free, yet if it consists (as the *Trent-Council* did) of some who had good Minds, but little Learning and Discretion, and of others who had more Learning and political Discretion, but evil Designs, I cannot conceive how it can be expected they should be infallible in any, and much less in every one, of their Decisions, how many soever they may be, without supposing them, or, however, the major Part of them, to be under an immediate Inspiration and over-ruling Influence of the Holy Ghost. But to suppose this,
without

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without any Warrant from Scripture, (for *there*, I
am sure, they will find none) is, to my Appre-
hension, neither better nor worse than an *enthusi-*
astical, or *fanatic* Supposition.

The Foundation of the religious Orders in the
Church of *Rome* is also laid in *Fanaticism*, down-
right *Fanaticism*, and of the worst Kind. The
chief of them, they tell us, are of divine Institu-
tion. A great Champion of that Church, Cardi-
nal *Bellarmino*, affirms [*m*], concerning the *Benedic-*
tines, the *Carthusians*, the *Dominicans*, the *Fran-*
ciscans, the Monks also and Nuns of the Order of
Camaldole, founded by St. *Romuald*, that, though
they were *approved* and *confirmed* by Popes, they
were *instituted* by their respective Founders, *Spiri-*
tu Sancto docente, by the Teaching or Inspiration
of the Holy Ghost. To whom let me add, the
Monks and Nuns of the Order of St. *Brigit*. The
Legends say she was Queen of *Sweedland*, and in
1360 went to *Rome*, to Pope *Urban V.* to get from
him a Confirmation of a new Order of both Sexes,
which she told him she had instituted by the ex-
press Command of *Jesus Christ* himself. The easy
Pope readily believed her, received her very cour-
teously, and confirmed her Order, at the first Re-
quest. Neither content with publishing to the World
that she instituted her Order by the Command of
Christ, but she gave it out, and it easily obtained
Belief, that the very Rule of her Order was dic-
tated by *Him*, *not composed by the Wisdom of Man*,
but by God himself, nay, that *every Word in it was*

[*m*] De Pont Rom. l. iii. c. 18.

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inspired by the Holy Ghost. And she ventures to
vouch the same, not only for that of *St. Francis*,
but for all the other Rules of the religious Orders[n].
I hope those Rules are more worthy of God than
some of hers are. For who, but an *Ideot*, or a
Fanatic, can believe, that *Jesus Christ* would pre-
scribe all the Things contained in her Rule, that
he would order *Iron Gates*, and a *Turning-box*, to slip
every Thing necessary into the *Monastery*, that he
would precisely set down the *Colour and Fashion of*
the Veils, and of all the *Habits of the Nuns*, both
for *Summer and Winter*, and in particular, ordain,
that *their Veils should be pinn'd with three Pins*, and
on the top of them, there should be a little *Crown of*
white Linen, spotted with little *Pieces of red Cloth*,
cut after the *Form of Drops of Blood*, and that the
Form of their very Beds, Blankets, and Pillows,
with divers other Things of the same Nature, and
of like Consequence, should be prescribed by him.
And after having prescribed all this, who can ima-
gine he would order her to go to the *Pope*, and
give her *Directions how she should satisfy him*, and
the whole *World*, that these Rules came immediately
from himself, namely, by appealing to the *Wisdom of*
them, which, it seems, is such as no human
Mind could reach and attain unto; and at last,
wisely suggest to her a *Reason*, if any one should
ask it, why this Rule for *Monks and Nuns* was not
given before the *Creation of the World*. Did you
ever hear the like? Why Rules, for the Conduct
of her *Monks and Nuns*, were not given before

[n] *Brigitta Revel.* l. vii. c. 20. p. 559.

the Creation of the World! Is it credible, is it possible, that *Jesus Christ* should come down from Heaven, to dictate to that Woman such low and non-sensical Stuff as this? And must not that Church be drunk with Enthusiasm, which can receive it, as his Dictate? We are often told by those of that Church, that we can have no Certainty of any Part of Scripture being written by divine Inspiration, but by the *infallible Authority* of their Church. But her Authority for the Inspiration and Authenticity of Scripture, or any Parcel of it, is not worth a Farthing, if she receives it with the same Easiness, and with no more Caution and Examination, than she receives, for divinely dictated or inspired, the Rules of her monastick Orders, or the supposed Visions and Revelations of her Saints.

Indeed, it is surprising to consider with what Simplicity, or seeming Simplicity, the most improbable and ridiculous Stories are received, and the most whimsical Visions and Revelations believed, in that Church, not only by the ignorant and superstitious Vulgar, but by wiser Heads, their Priests, and Bishops, Cardinals, and Popes. If *St. Catharine*, or *St. Philip Neri* give it out that they have the Faculty not only of seeing, but of smelling Souls, and can easily distinguish, by their Stench, the Souls of the wicked from those of others, these Fancies, as rank as they smell of Imposture, are swallowed down without the least Difficulty. Nor is there more Difficulty in believing *that* of the Devils getting into *St. Francis's* Pillow, and his shaking him

out, or his creeping into the Cell of that Saint, in the Shape of a handsome Woman to tempt him to Lust, or throwing himself in his Way, in the Form of a Purse of Gold, to make him break his Vow of Poverty. The Story of St. *Anselm's* Fighting, or *Juliana's* Wrestling with him, is as easily believed. As to her Visions and Revelations, or those of St. *Catharine*, St. *Teresa*, St. *Brigit*, St. *Ignatius*, and twenty more, they have obtained, in the Church of *Rome*, almost as much Credit, as those of St. *John*, the Divine, in the *Apocalypse*. Such *fanatical Visionaries* are honoured, there, when living, and often fainted, when dead. Their Frenzies are received with the highest Approbation of the highest Authority in the Church. You often see them affirmed and justified in the Bulls of Popes, mentioned in the Prayers, and read in the Lessons of the *Breviary*, for the Imitation, or the Instruction and Admonition of the People.

It was far otherwise in the primitive Church, and is now in the Church of *England*. The primitive Church ('tis true) had its *Enthusiasts*, *Montanus*, *Maximilla*, *Theodotus*, and divers others. But they were neither such *Ideots* in themselves, nor so extravagant in their *Reveries*, nor cherished by the Church, as they are in the Church of *Rome*. On the contrary, she absolutely disowned them, condemned the Spirit they were acted by, as not the Spirit of *Christ*, nor the Spirit of the Church, and cast them out of her Communion. The Spirit of *Enthusiasm* has also been stirring among us, and as our Fathers had their *Naylor*, *Muggleton*,
and

and *Venner*, so we have our *Whitefield*, and his Associates. But *they are gone out from us, because they were not of us*. When this young *enthusiastical* Divine first appeared, he was received, and every where treated as a Brother; his Labours were encouraged, and his Zeal applauded. But as soon as he assumed the Character, and talked in the Style of an extraordinary Missionary from God, to plant (forsooth) the Gospel among us, when he began to speak of himself, as thinking and acting under the Guidance of a divine Inspiration, to tell us of *extraordinary Communications he had with God, and of his Assurance that God intended to work, through him, a great Work upon the Earth, to claim the Spirit of Prophecy, and to certify, that God, by his Spirit, had spoken divers Things to his Soul, of which there will certainly be a fulfilling hereafter*, when he came (I say) to set up with these Pretensions, without any thing, but his own Assurance, to support them, he was quickly given up, discarded, and disowned, as an incurable *Enthusiast*, and is now become almost universally obnoxious. But had this Gentleman been brought up a *Papist*, and had *Italy* or *Spain* been the Scene upon which he had acted the same; or a much more *enthusiastical* Part than he has done in *England*, and had he kept any Measures with the Church and Clergy, (which, no doubt, he would have done, because they would have regarded his Inspirations in another Manner than our Church and Clergy do) all the Church would have agreed in honouring him with many Honours, and I do not know but he might have been fainted in the next Generation; provided (I mean)

mean) his Family were both able and willing, or any good Lady, or any Confraternity he should have belonged to, during his mortal Life, or the City of his Nativity, were disposed to disburse, and pay down a hundred thousand *Roman* Crowns to the Pope's Holiness. For *that*, belike, is the Price of a Canonization. Though, methinks, it is somewhat odd, that while it is held, at *Rome*, unlawful, to purchase with Money the lowest Promotion in the Church *Militant* here on Earth, his Holiness should have no Scruple to take Money, and that openly, for the highest Dignity in the Church *Triumphant* which is in Heaven. If this is not Simony, 'tis something very like it, unless, perchance, his *Holiness* can be brought off by alledging, (what is very true) that though he takes the Money, he does not bestow the Preferment stipulated, (the Right of bestowing it being in another) but leaves the Party in the Church, in the same State he was in before, whether that be in Heaven, or in another Place.

I think, enough has been said to fix the Character of encouraging *Enthusiasm* upon the Church of *Rome*. We will now proceed to shew that such a Character as this, fairly fix'd upon that Church, is a good Reason for any Protestant to beware of, and keep off from it.

When Enthusiasts are encouraged, and come to prevail, in any Church, they are like to throw every thing into Distraction and Confusion. They will not be confined to any Rules of Order or Discipline, but affect to act irregularly in all Things, rather than otherwise. And indeed, they must be permitted

permitted to act as they please, if it be once supposed they are really under a divine Impulse and Instigation. For to restrain them, from saying or doing any thing they have a Mind to, would be esteemed a withstanding, and *fighting against God*. And among other Disorders and Irregularities, irregular Preaching is one which they never fail to fall into. No sooner does one of them take it into his Head, that the special Presence of God is with him, imagines he sees Visions, and feels inward supernatural Assurances and Illuminations, but presently, let him be Soldier or Mechanic, or what he will, in Contempt of all the Rules of Decency and ecclesiastical Discipline, he falls a preaching, and, perhaps, rambles the World over, as one sent of God, to instruct and convert it. If he be a *Protestant Enthusiast*, he will perhaps, go to convert the Pope: If a Popish one, 'tis a Chance, if he is not for converting the *Grand Seignior*, as that ignorant Fanatick St. *Francis* went, ragged and bare-footed, to the *Soldan of Babylon*, demanding an Audience of him, for the Conversion of him, and his People. Perhaps, he will be so intoxicated with the Honour of the new Office he fancies himself called to, that he cannot forbear to exercise it towards irrational Creatures, as St. *Anthony* towards the Fishes, (of which Mention was made before) and another of the *fanatical* Saints of the Church of *Rome*, who was a Herdsman, towards his own *Bullocks*, who, it seems, applauded his Preaching by their Bellowing, as the Fishes did that of St. *Anthony*, by their ducking under
Water,

Water, and frisking about in an unusual Manner, at the Conclusion of it.

And this suggests another terrible Consequence of *Enthusiasm*, when cherished and encouraged by any Church, it grievously exposes the Christian Faith to Contempt and Derision. The whimsical and irrational Actions of *Enthusiasts* are the Sport of its Enemies of all Sorts. Nor do they only afford Sport and Diversion to its Enemies, but help to strengthen and confirm them in their Enmity to, or their Scorn of it; especially, those of them that have been brought up in, and are possessed with an Opinion, as most People are in Countries of the *Roman Catholic* Communion, that if true Christianity is any where to be found, it must be in *that* Church. If any *Unbeliever* were to undertake the Perversion of a *Papist* to *Infidelity*, or *Scepticism*; I scarcely know a more likely Way he could take for it, than putting into his Hands some of the Lives and *Jests* (as *F. Cressy* expresses it) of their *fanatick* Saints; for Example, those of *St. Francis*, and *St. Ignatius*, together with the Acts of their Canonization. How must a sensible Man, educated in that Communion, and under the Persuasion before-mentioned, be surpris'd and ashamed, shock'd and staggered, how apt to fall into a mean and dishonourable Opinion of *Christianity* itself, when he shall see Bishops, Archbishops, Patriarchs, Cardinals, and Popes, the whole *Hierarchy* of the *Roman* Church, taken up and employed in aggrandizing and deifying, as it were, perhaps a wretched Sinner, but, at the best, a crack'd-brained Fool, and Fanatick; setting him up as a fit Object of the

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Invocation and Adoration of the Faithful, putting the whole Church (forsooth) under his salutary Help, and omnipotent Protection, and commanding by the [pretended] Authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by that of St. Peter, and St. Paul, to the Honour of the holy and undivided Trinity, and by the Inspiration of the most holy and immaculate Virgin Mary, that his Name be inserted in the Catalogue of Saints, that his most holy Memory be yearly, on his Birth-Day, celebrated with Devotion, by the Church universal, and that his Body and Relicks be, the same Day, devoutly honoured and adored, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

But that which it will most concern a *Protestant* to consider, in relation to the Encouragement of *Enthusiasm* in the Church of Rome, is this, that 'tis a certain Sign^l of a great Degeneracy and Corruption in that Church. It plainly shews, that 'tis very corrupt already, or in a sure Way to be so. *Enthusiasm* has a natural Tendency to introduce and spread wild and strange Opinions, as well as foolish and irrational Practices; and wherever 'tis encouraged by any Church, one may fairly presume it is done with a View to introduce them, or to authorize and give Credit to them, when they have been before introduced. It is not easy to conceive, that a Society so illustrious as the Church of Rome, abounding, as it certainly does, with Men of the most eminent Learning, as well as the greatest Discernment and Penetration, can sincerely believe, and cordially embrace, all the Frenzies which have been vented by the *Enthusiasts* of that Church, or that they would give them so much

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much Countenance as they do, if it was not to serve some such base and corrupt Ends. And that these are really the Ends which they do propose to serve, is evident from hence, that they do always either receive or reject the Visions and Revelations of *fanatical* Spirits, according as they are favourable, or unfavourable to *them*. If they are unfavourable to the Church of *Rome*, and throw Disgrace upon any of the Doctrines and Practices of it, they are immediately rejected, as *Protestant, fanatical Whimsies*. But if favourable, or if there be only one Vision, or one Revelation, amongst fifty of a neutral Kind, that favours the Pretensions of that Church, or gives Countenance and Credit to any single Doctrine, Practice, Devotion, or Ceremony of it, (though it were but the Use of holy Water) it shall be received without any Difficulty, and for the Sake of *that one*, all the rest shall be admitted, approved, and authorized by the Church. How many have been given out, and received, as undoubted heavenly Visions and Revelations, with a View to bring in, and establish the Doctrine of *Purgatory*, of the Efficacy of Masses, and the Prayers of the Faithful for the Deliverance of Souls out of it, and of the Benefit of *Indulgences*! How many also in Favour of Confession, the Worship of the Virgin *Mary*, of Transubstantiation, and the Adoration of the Host! How many by *St. Brigit*, and others, to support the Doctrine of the *Franciscans*, that the holy Virgin was conceived without original Sin; (which the Church favours, as appears from her authorized and allowed Offices) and how many by *St. Catharine of Siena*, and others, (though 'tis

somewhat odd, that Heaven should be so much divided against itself) to support the contrary Doctrine of the *Dominicans* (for which both Scripture and Antiquity are clear and full) *that she was conceived in original Sin, as all the Children of Adam are.* Nor do they only make Use of their *Visionaries* and *Enthusiasts*, to give Authority to the *peculiar Doctrines* of the Church, but also to amuse and possess the People with the Belief of certain wonderful *Facts* concerning our Saviour, the *Virgin Mary*, and others, of which the Scriptures are wholly silent. The Church of *Rome*, it seems, cannot only tell you from *Epiphanius* (though they cannot tell you how *Epiphanius* knew it) who were the Father and Mother of the *Virgin Mary*, that their Names were *Joachim* and *Ann*, but can also inform you of the principal Circumstances and Passages of their Lives, that they lived together many Years (indeed to an Age past having Children) before they had a Child; that being overwhelmed with Grief and Shame for their Barrenness, they parted, till *Joachim*, admonished by an Angel, and receiving from him the Promise of a Child, went home to his Wife, and that *Mary*, accordingly, was, in due Time, born to him; that this holy Child exercised itself with many heavenly and sublime Contemplations, before it was born, in its Mother's Womb; that it was conceived the eighth of *December*, and born the eighth of *September* after; that as at the Birth of our Saviour, an unusual Star appeared, and the Angels sang—*Glory to God in the highest*; so at the Birth of *Mary*, the Light of the Sun was doubled, and the Light
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of the Moon equal to that of the Sun at any other Time; that, at the same Time, an innumerable Multitude of Angels came down from Heaven, chanting Hymns in the Air most melodiously, and, which is more, that they did it, on the same Day, for many Years after, though it was not known for what Reason this was done, till a certain Monk, in one of his Extasies, took the Boldness to beg of God that he would reveal it to him, who then told him, it seems, it was in Honour of the Nativity of the blessed Virgin; that this glorious little Virgin, after three Years old, was brought to the *Holy of Holies*, that she remained and grew up there, for eleven Years, the Angels supplying her with Food all the while, that when she was taken from thence, being fourteen Years of Age, she was put under the Guardianship of St. *Joseph*, to whom she was presently espoused; that, about three Months after, she conceived of the Holy Ghost, and, at the Age of fifteen, brought forth her Son, the holy Child *Jesus*; that she lived many Years after her Son, till at last, praying to be dissolved, and to be with him, he sent an Angel to her, with a Promise, that within three Days, he would take her to himself; that just before her Decease, *Jesus Christ*, with all the Orders of Angels, with the glorious Assembly of *Patriarchs, Prophets, &c.* descended from Heaven, and appeared before her Bed, and the twelve Apostles were taken up, and wonderfully whirl'd through the Air, from different Parts of the World, to be present at her Death, and assist, according to her Request, at her Interment; that after she had rendered her Soul into the Hands of
Jesus

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Jesus, her Body spoke; that it being buried, all the Apostles attended at her Tomb, three Days; after which, *Jesus*, descending again from Heaven, with his holy Angels, and the Soul of *Mary* soon appearing, he said to the Body, *arise my Well-beloved*; It arose, and was immediately *assumed* into Heaven.

— All these things (belike) and that with Abundance of marvellous Circumstances attending them more than I have mentioned, are well known, and firmly believed, in the Church of *Rome*, concerning *Joachim*, *Ann*, and *the blessed Virgin*, insomuch that *Festivals* are appointed in Honour and Commemoration of some of them, particularly those of the *Conception*, and *Assumption* of *Mary* into Heaven. And for *Jesus Christ*, they know and believe concerning him also, many things more than we do, or than there is the least Intimation of, in the holy Scriptures; as, how many Stripes he received at his Scourging, how often the *Jews* spat in his Face, and how many Wounds, precisely, were made in his sacred Head, by the Thorns which they crown'd him with. And if you should enquire (as, it must be owned, the most learned need not be ashamed to do) what Means that Church has of knowing these Things; it is by Visions, Revelations, Apparitions, and personal Conferences with *Jesus Christ*, and his blessed Mother. For you must know, they often condescended to come down to Earth, and to *speak Face to Face, as a Man speaketh to his Friend*, to the Saints and Saintesses of that Church.

And now consider whether any Reverence or Regard is to be shewn to a Church which en-

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courages *Enthusiasm* at so vile a Rate, and, which is still worse, makes such a scandalous, and abominable use of it. The leading and governing Part of that Church are no Fools, but very wise Men in their Generation. And though some may be blinded by Superstition, or by the Prejudices of Education inclined to think too favourably of the Pretences of their own Fanaticks, the greater Part of them, I am firmly persuaded, are as sensible as any of us can be, that they are only the Whimfies of ignorant, melancholy, hypocondriack Persons, or the Frauds of Cheats and Impostors, who by taking Notice with what Easiness the Church receives the Raptures, the Visions, Révelations, and Inspirations of unfeigning and deluded *Enthusiasts*, and what Honours are there bestowed upon them, and finding in themselves the proper Talents and Qualifications for it, are encouraged and emboldened (through a Desire of Fame, or to promote some villainous Design) to act that Part. The Priesthood (I say) know very well what they do, when they encourage *Enthusiasts*. 'Tis not for nothing, or out of Choice, that they encourage them *so*; but because they know how to make use of them, and to turn their pretended Inspirations to good Account. There are no fitter Instruments, than these, for a corrupt Clergy to work with, in depraving Religion, and making it subservient to their covetous, or ambitious Purposes. And this leads to another just and well-grounded Objection against the *Roman Catholic* Religion, which shall, in the following Section, be considered.

S E C T. III.

Wherein it is made to appear, as a just Objection against the Roman Catholic Religion, that the peculiar Doctrines and Practices of it are calculated to serve secular Ends, viz. the enriching, and exalting the Power of the Priesthood.

IT is not my Intention, here, to represent the Avarice or Ambition of the *Roman* Clergy, which would no way advance my Design. For I am not so unreasonable, or so great a Stranger to the Nature and Laws of Catholic Communion, as to go about to persuade any one, who is *out* of the Church of *Rome*, to *keep out* of it, or any one, who is *in* it, to abandon and forsake it, merely because those Vices are too prevailing amongst the Pastors or Governors thereof. For I am very sensible, that 'tis possible for Religion, even where the Priesthood is too much tainted with them, to remain sound and uncorrupt. *Possible* I say; tho' when a secular Spirit is found to prevail in any Church to so notorious a Degree as it manifestly does in the Church of *Rome*, 'tis hardly reasonable to expect any other, than that Religion will be depraved and adulterated, and so modeled, as to make it subservient to all their worldly Designs. And I believe it will be seen, by and by, that this is actually the Case in that Church.

I have now lying before me a Treatise [1] which was written by one who had been many Years

[1] *Parthenopæus Hæreticus.*

both *Papist* and *Jesuit*. And if he fairly represents (for indeed I have not the Tracts he has quoted [m] by me) the Sentiments and Maxims of two or three great *Cardinals*, concerning the Riches and Dominion of the Clergy, ecclesiastical Polity, or the Art of governing the Church, no better Issue or State of Things, in that Church, can, in Reason, be expected. “ In this present Age, (they
 “ tell us) Wealth is that which upholds the Spi-
 “ ritual Authority, and produces Respect for the
 “ Clergy, in the Minds of all thinking and wise
 “ Persons, as, in the primitive Times, it was
 “ maintained by Retirement, Self-denial, Holiness
 “ of Life:—That though poor Clergymen are
 “ yet respected by some devout Women, and by
 “ Men of a crazy and inverted Brain, they
 “ are undervalued and laugh’d at by the wise,
 “ and in the Courts of Princes, where the Rich are
 “ honourably received, and esteemed: — That
 “ Riches, being so serviceable to the Clergy for
 “ the better carrying on of their Designs, and
 “ without which they can do nothing, they should
 “ wisely endeavour to acquire them by all Means
 “ and Stratagems, by changing, complying, and
 “ dissembling, upon all Occasions, and taking
 “ good Care not to let themselves be known for
 “ what they really are:—That the Doctrines of
 “ the holy Fathers are but Whimsies, entertained
 “ by Men who have a blind Zeal, and are enslaved

[m] *Bellarmino's* Instructions to the *Jesuits* of the Kingdom of *Naples*, when he was their Provincial. *Card. Toledo's* Harangue to the general Congregation of *Jesuits*. *Cardinal Pallavicino's* Letter to the *Jesuits* in *China*.

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“ to vulgar Opinions, and know nothing of true
“ Wisdom, nor have any Understanding of Church-
“ Government:—That to compass their Ends,
“ they must not scruple the Assistance of *pious*
“ *Frauds* and *Æquivocations*, and to adapt the
“ Laws of the Gospel to every Person’s Temper
“ and Inclination:—That they are only a Parcel of
“ ignorant Monks, that cry down and exclaim
“ against such Morals, and turn true Prudence,
“ and the *Quintessence* of *Evangelical* Maxims into
“ Scandal and Contempt:—That ’tis very impoli-
“ tick to endeavour to reduce the Discipline and
“ Laws of the *Catholic* Church to the primitive
“ Purity, and Observance of Canons, which were
“ made when the Church was in her Infancy, and
“ are full of ridiculous Stuff, and indigested Pedan-
“ try; but that she is now, in this more polite
“ and refined Age, to be governed, and the *Ec-*
“ *clesiastical* Power maintained and encreased, by
“ other Methods, such as shall make the *Crown*
“ bow to the *Mitre*, and the *Sword* to the *Pastoral*:
“ —In fine, that to talk of Reformation is nothing
“ but vain and insignificant Prattle, and that what
“ People, enslaved to vulgar Opinions, will call
“ heinous and intolerable Corruptions, is the most
“ refined Conduct of Ecclesiastical Affairs, and
“ spiritual Government.”—These are the Senti-
ments and Maxims, according to which the Church
of *Rome* has been governed, its Authority exercised,
and Religion therein conducted, for several Centu-
ries of Years, and the Consequence has been, what
was natural to be, that a Multitude of Supersti-
tions, strange Devotions, erroneous Doctrines, and

corrupt Practices, plainly calculated for increasing the Wealth, and enlarging the Empire of the Clergy over the Persons and Consciences of the People, have been, from Time to Time, brought into it. Let us come to some of the Particulars, and to those, in the first Place, which were contrived and brought in, to fill the Pockets of the Priesthood.

The Supremacy, which the Bishops of *Rome*, after much Struggle and Contention, and by many foul Arts, did, at last, make a Shift to attain to over the western Church, has been, and is still, after so many Kingdoms and Provinces have shaken off and freed themselves from it, a Source of immense Wealth. *As all the Rivers run into the Sea*, so, the Riches of all Countries, following the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, run thither. In this Kingdom, particularly, the Exactions of the Popes, under Colour of Pensions, Peter-Pence, Procurations, First-Fruits, Suits for Provisions, Expeditions of Bulls for Archbishopricks and Bishopricks, Rescripts in Causes of Contentions and Appeals, Legantine Jurisdictions, Dispensations, Licences, Faculties, Grants, Relaxations, and divers other Pretences, reckoned up in the Statute of 25 Hen. VIII. besides an infinite Number of *sundry Natures, Names, and Kinds, the Specialties whereof were too many, as well as too long and tedious, to be there particularly inserted*, these Exactions of the Popes, upon the Foot of an usurped Supremacy, were become more burthensome, and as the Commons, in the Reign of *Edward III.* declared, *more detrimental and ruinous to the Realm, than all the Wars of their Lord the King had been.*

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The Doctrine of Veneration due to the Relicks of the Saints is also a gainful one, as well to the Popes, as to the Churches, and Monasteries, which are so fortunate as to possess themselves of them. For *Rome* is the Mart for Relicks, especially, for that Branch of the Trade, which relates to the Bodies of Saints and Martyrs; and the *Catacombs* there, where the Bodies of *Pagan Romans*, as well as of *Christians*, of *Martyrs*, and no *Martyrs*, *Saints*, and no *Saints*, were, in all Probability, indifferently deposited, are the never-failing and inexhaustible *Magazines*, from whence the Popes and Cardinals supply the Churches and Monasteries of their Communion, all the World over. And as they put upon the Limbs and Bones thus distributed the Names of this, or of that Saint, just as the Toy takes them, it often happens, that the Head, or other Part of the Body, of one and the same Saint, is found in divers Places. Hence Controversies arise (as indeed it is meant they should) between the Churches and Monasteries which possess them, which of them have the true and genuine Relick of the Saint. And the Determination of these Controversies, properly belonging to the Court of *Rome*, is a constant Revenue to it. And, indeed, we are told, there are *there* almost as many Trials about *Relicks*, as there are about *beneficiary* Matters, and the former no less expensive than the latter.—As to the Churches and Monasteries which are thus supplied with any notable Relick, they are presently enriched by it. A Tear of our Saviour, a little of the Virgin *Mary's* Milk, which hundreds of their Churches are happily possessed

of, the Arm, the Leg, or Jaw-bone of some other celebrated Saint, deposited in any Church, is an Estate to it, by drawing from all Parts vast Numbers of People to pay their Devotions, and to leave at the Altar (for Pilgrims don't use to go empty-handed) their Offerings to it.

It would be an endless thing to go about to give you only a cold Detail, and much more a particular Relation of the several Inventions of Priests and Monks to get Money, under Colour of Religion and Devotion, such as their *Feasts*, *Confraternities*, and *Processions*, (which they know how to turn to their Advantage) their *Pilgrimages* also to holy Places, to pay their Devotions to the Body, or Image of some extraordinary Saint, as of the Apostle St. *James* at *Compostella*, St. *Anthony* (the God of *Italy*) at *Padua*, or the Virgin *Mary* at *Loretto*. But *Loretto*! one knows not how to mention *Loretto*, without running out into a little Ridicule upon the Story of it. Here, we have the House, the self same House, (for so the Fable goes) wherein the blessed *Jesus* was conceived, brought up, and lived, till he was thirty Years old, and entered upon his Ministry, which having stood at *Nazareth* twelve hundred Years, uninjured by Time or Weather (a pretty good while, you will say, for a mean Cottage of Twenty-five Foot in Length to endure) was, whole and entire, taken up and carried by Angels through the Air, over Sea and Land, some thousands of Miles, and after three or four Removes, was set in the Place where it has stood ever since. Was there ever such an Instance of sacerdotal Craft and Imposition, or of popular Folly

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Folly and Credulity? Is there a Priest or Friar in all *Italy*, who believes a Syllable of this Story? I can hardly believe there is, and would go farther to see, as greater Curiosities, the *Confessors*, and *grand Penitentiaries*, and other Priests who serve there, to watch the muscular Motions of their Faces, when they steal Looks at one another, and to observe the Mummery with which they perform their Offices, than I would to see the Chapel itself, or the motionless, worm-eaten Puppet set up there, to receive the Adorations of the People, though she were covered with Diamonds, and dressed up in all the Finery and Bravery she is Mistress of. Yet, down from the *Pope* to the meanest *Capuchin*, they would all seem to believe it. What Defence can be made for such horrible Hypocrisy, and Imposture? How can they satisfy their Consciences, while they encourage, and with so many Artifices allure, Persons of all Ranks and Qualities, and almost every Tongue and People, to visit this House, and pay their Devotions to it, for which they must be convinced there is no Foundation? They have, indeed, a thin Sort of Covering for this Shame,—That, *if it be a Fraud, it is a pious one, and no way opposite to the Glory of God, and that the disowning of it, after having practised it so many hundred Years, would give great Scandal to the People.* But, sure, the continuing of it must give greater to those who see through it, as every Man of natural common Sense, (whose Eyes are not closed by Bigotry and Superstition) will easily do. No, it is not the *Piety*, but the *Gainfullness* of the *Fraud* that holds it up. If the
Fraud

Fraud were renounced and disclaimed, if Pilgrimages to the holy Virgin of *Loretto* were no more, and the Devotions performed to her, *there*, wholly to cease, *there* would be an End of all the rich Offerings, which *Catholic* Queens and Princesses, as well as others, bestow upon her: (which, however, the Church only, and not she, is the better for) the fifty-thousand Masses which are every Year paid for (though not half of them are, or can be said) would be lost: The Priests would be impoverished: All *Italy*, but more especially the Territories of the *Pope*, would be great Sufferers; and which is worst of all, his Holiness himself would lose no inconsiderable Part of his Revenue.

But the neatest Contrivance the Church has, to bring in Money, is, the Doctrine of *Purgatory*, and of the Power of Masses to bring Souls out of it. This is a constant and inexhaustible Fund of Wealth to the Priests and Monks; and what some have said is not, I believe far from Truth, that the Discovery of *Purgatory* has brought, into *their* Pockets, more Gold and Silver, than the Discovery of the *Indies* has into the Treasury of the King of *Spain*. Every body, we know, must die. And who, if he believes a *Purgatory*, would not, when he dies, give away, from his Heirs, a good Limb of his Estate, to deliver his Soul from the Pains of it; (for the Fire of *Purgatory*, you must know, is as fierce as the Fire of *Hell*, for the Time it lasts) especially, since he can never tell, how many Months or Years, or Centuries of Years, it will please God (if he orders no Masses to be paid for) to keep him in it. And you, accordingly,
find,

find, that, though in some Parts of the *Roman Church*, where Learning flourishes, and Knowledge is encreased, the Relief of Souls, roasting in *Purgatory*, is not quite so much consider'd, yet, in most Places, there is Reason to believe, few die, without leaving something, more or less, according to their Abilities, to get their Souls out of it. Nor is it a six-penny or twelve-penny Touch that the Priests value, on such Occasions. They are not much used to such niggardly Doings; but the most covetous and miserable

The Wretch who, living, spared a Candle's End,
will be, at such Times, very liberal and open-handed, even to the Impoverishment, if not to the Ruin, of his Family. A hundred, five hundred, a thousand, fifty-thousand Crowns, and more, according as God has given to every Man, are often bestowed upon the Priests and Religious, for the worthy Pains they are to take to fetch him out of that dismal and forlorn Place. These are noble Perquisites, on which they may live sweetly, and fare deliciously every Day. And, therefore, 'tis no Wonder, they are as watchful as Undertakers, and have as good Intelligence of the Moment when any one's Breath goes forth, that they may break in upon his Heirs and Executors, before others have Notice of his Death, to get the Saying of the Masses he shall have ordered by his last Will and Testament. The great Wonder is, that the People should be so foolish, as to suffer themselves to be choused out of their Monies and Estates, by such groundless and ridiculous Pretences. They are
not

not allowed, and, therefore, we do not expect, they should *search the Scriptures, to see if these Things be so*. But are they not capable of *reasoning* a little upon the Matter? What! have they no Knowledge, that they cannot consider, that though Fire will purge Gold and Silver of its Dross, it is no proper Furnace for purifying Souls, and separating from *them* the Dross and Filth of Iniquity and Sin. Are they so without Understanding, that they cannot perceive, how likely it is (even supposing a Purgatory) that all their Money will be thrown away to no Purpose, either by Reason the Party for whose Relief the Money is given, and the Masses are said, may not have been at all in Purgatory, but went down quick into Hell, or, if he *was* ever there, may be already *out*, or if not, that there is a Necessity, not to be removed by any thing we can do here on Earth, he should remain there, till such Time as the End, for which he was sent thither, shall be completely and thoroughly effected. Their own *Catechism* tells them, [o] that, “*In the Fire of Purgatory, the Souls of*”
 “*the pious, for a certain determined Time, are cleans-*”
 “*ed by sufferings, that so the Entrance to the bea-*”
 “*venly Country may be laid open, into which no pol-*”
 “*luted Thing can be admitted.*” Now if the Time be certain and *determined*, as the *Catechism* teaches, how can it be shortened? And how can a Soul be brought out, before the *determined* Time comes? And if it be sent thither, in order to its *Purgation*, can it be supposed, that God, in Regard to the

[o] The Trent Catechism, under the Article, *He descended into Hell*, Sect. 5.

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Memento of the Mass, or the Prayers of any Person whatsoever, will release it from thence, before its Purgation is accomplished? would this be consistent with the Wisdom of God? Or, supposing that God, in return to his Prayers, should release it, before it is thoroughly purged from its Defilements, what does he do with it? And how does he dispose of it? For he cannot receive it into Heaven, where (as their *Catechism* says) *nothing unclean can enter*. Neither can we suppose he will detain any Soul there, after its Purgation is fully and thoroughly completed. For what Reason should he do it? Will he do it, in Displeasure, because no Masses were said for it? How would this be consistent with his Goodness? How would it stand with that Attribute, to keep a Wretch in *Purgatory-Torments*, no body knows how long, after the Reason of his being cast into them has been fully answered, only because he and his Friends have neglected to employ, and pay a Priest, to help him out. Is God more solicitous that the Priests should be rich, and *their Souls satiated with Fatness* in this World, than that his People should be happy in the other? If the Laity of the *Roman* Communion, laying aside, a few Moments, the foolish Conceit of the *Infallibility* of their Church in all its Determinations, would but allow themselves to think, and reason the Case within themselves in some such Way as I have now been doing, they would soon come (I fancy) into the Opinion of the great Cardinal Richlieu, that *just so many Masses will get a Soul out of Purgatory, as it will take Snow-balls to heat an Oven*, and not part with

with their Monies and Estates, so easily as they do, to procure them.—And now a Word or two concerning Doctrines and Practices brought into the Church, to raise the Dignity, and to enlarge the Power and Domination of the Clergy.

We are no way inclined to dispute the sacerdotal Dignity, but readily allow that as the Trust and Office of the Priesthood was always esteemed honourable among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, so it ought to be held in the same Estimation amongst *Christians*. Notwithstanding which, we cannot but think, that the Stile and Language, wherein the *Romish* Clergy always speak of themselves, is too lofty and *hyperbolical*, and plainly discovers an Affectation of Dominion, and of bringing all the Kings and Kingdoms of the World into Subjection to them. This however, had it been all, might have been born with. But they could not stop here. Religion itself, to exalt and extend their Power, has been corrupted; and no inconsiderable Part of the Errors and Innovations by which *Popery* stands distinguished from *primitive Christianity*, and *Protestantism*, has been purposely contrived to serve that End.

From the Days of Pope *Boniface III.* the first of the Bishops of *Rome* who assumed the proud Title of *Universal Pastor*, they have been pursuing the Enlargement of their Power, and, in this Attempt, have succeeded so well, that they had brought, at length, the whole *Western Church* into Subjection to them. And to support themselves in this *Usurpation*, they have now made it an Article of Faith, and put it into their Creed, (and without

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 the Belief of it they tell us there is no Salvation)
 that *the Church of Rome is the Mother and Mistress*
of all Churches. Having gained their Point in re-
 spect of spiritual and ecclesiastical Power, they be-
 gan to lust after Power and Dominion in tempo-
 ral Things; and to compass *that*, the *deposing Doc-*
trine was set up. St. Peter, (it seems) whose Suc-
 cessors the Bishops of Rome give themselves out
 to be, was made *universal Monarch.* For God has
 given him (so indeed says the *Roman Breviary* [p])
 though 'tis Pity it does not tell us, when, and
 where, he gave him) *all the Kingdoms of the World,*
 which, no Doubt, is meant of the temporal Do-
 minion he was invested with over all the Princes
 and Potentates thereof. And agreeably to this
 pretended Grant, made to St. Peter, the Pope,
 when the triple Crown is put upon his Head, at
 his Coronation, is called *the Governor of the*
World [q]. 'Tis current Doctrine at Rome, and is
 avowed by the *Canon-Law*, that he has an Autho-
 rity *paramount* over all the Potentates of the Earth,
 at least, over all Christian Princes, by Virtue
 whereof he can, not only compell them to make
 War or Peace, or to do whatever else he shall
 think requisite, *in order to* the good of the Church,
 but can also deprive them, if need so require, of
 their Crowns and Dignities, discharge their Subjects

[p] Edit. Antw. 1614. in Festo Petri & Pauli, & in Festo Pe-
 tri ad Vincula.

[q] Accipe Thyram, &c. Take thou this Diadem, adorned
 with three Crowns, and know thyself to be—the Father of Princes
 and Kings—Governor of the World—and Vicar upon Earth
 of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

from

from their Allegiance, and give away their Dominions to another. But the more moderate Sort of *Papists* will allow, he may do this in Case of *Heresy*, or *favouring of Hereticks*, and esteem that Opinion, as there is Reason, an Article of Faith. Indeed, it is not put into the *Trent Creed*, nor did the Fathers of the Council define any thing about it, in *express Words*, though they did, and, no doubt, intended to do it, by *Implication*. No, they are better *Politicians*, than, at a Time, when so many Princes had lately gone off from the Church, and others stood in a Readiness to follow them, to present to the World, in their new Creed, a Doctrine in its Nature so alarming to all Sovereign Princes, and so pernicious in its Tendency, or to move any Question concerning it. Especially, as they were not ignorant of its having been defined in a former Council, as general as their own, whereby they might save themselves the *Odium* of doing it. The fourth Council of *Lateran* had long before determined, “ That if
 “ the temporal Lord, being required and admonished by the Church, shall neglect to purge
 “ his Country from Heresy, let him be excommunicated by the *Metropolitan* and *Comprovincial*
 “ Bishops, and if he continue in his Contempt a
 “ whole Year, let this be signified to the Pope,
 “ that from henceforth he may declare his Vassals
 “ absolved from their Allegiance to him, and give
 “ away his Land to be possessed by Catholics.” And that Sovereign Princes, as well as inferior feudatary Lords, are involved in the same Censure,
 in

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in Case they involve themselves in the same Crime, is plain from what follows—" *Saving the Right of the principal Lord, provided he put no Obstacle or Impediment, in the Matter,*" plainly implying, that if he does throw in any Impediment or Obstacle, or oppose the Extirpating of Hereticks, he is to be treated in the same Manner. What now can be plainer, than as the former Doctrine of the Church of Rome being *the Mother and Mistress of all Churches*, was calculated to secure the *spiritual and ecclesiastical*, so the latter Dream of the *universal Monarchy* of St. Peter, and his Successors, was invented to secure *atemporal* Dominion to the Pope? And what more than this can be thought necessary to give him an absolute Command over the Faithful, both in Spirituals, and Temporals, unless it be the breeding in their Minds a firm Persuasion and Belief, that he has some Power and Authority, too, in the World to come, and can make their State, there, more or less happy, according to his Pleasure? To this End, therefore, the Doctrine of the mighty Efficacy and Benefit of *Papal Indulgences* has been fitted up. It is affirmed by the Church, in the Creed before mentioned, as a Matter of Faith, and necessary to be believed, that *the Power of Indulgences was left by Christ to the Church, and that the Use of them is very profitable to christian People*. And what they are profitable for, we are informed by Bellarmine, and other approved Writers of the Church; not for a Relaxation of *canonical Penance*, but a Relaxation, or Release, from the Pains of *Purgatory*. And who, if he has any Heart to believe, that the Church, or its Head,

has such a Power, would refuse to be obedient, and to live in the most absolute Subjection to him, nay, to pay down, besides, any Sum, the whole World, if he was worth it, to be delivered from so dreadful a Place, and translated into Heaven, perhaps many Ages before he would otherwise have got thither.

But let us not think that the Church, in framing her Doctrines, has taken Care only of the Pope. For she has Doctrines and Practices that are as well calculated to raise the Honour, and enlarge the Power of the whole Priesthood, in Proportion. *Transubstantiation* is one of them. The Papists sometimes remark it, as an admirable Instance of the Wisdom of God, to find out so wonderful a Way to procure Reverence to the Priest, that he should be able, as often as he pleases, by a few Words speaking, miraculously to change the Substance of a Bit of Bread into the natural Body, and that of a few Drops of Wine into the natural Blood of *Jesus Christ*. But they mistake the Matter. It was not the *Wisdom* of God, but *the cunning Craftiness* of Men, which devised this *admirable Method*, as they call it, for procuring Honour to the Priesthood. The alwise God could never think of aggrandizing his Priests by telling the World he had enabled them to do contradictory Things, and, therefore, impossible to be done, even by himself. But foolish Men, not content with that Respect and Honour which is due to them upon account of the Usefulness and Dignity of their Office, as *the Ambassadors and Stewards of the Mysteries of God*, must needs be seeking another

other Kind of Honour, arising from the Power of doing Miracles. And indeed they have done it with a Witness. The Miracles of the Gospel are almost nothing, compared with that of *Transubstantiation*. Healing the Sick, making the Lame to walk, and the Blind to see, casting out Devils, and raising the Dead are poor and pitiful Performances, in Comparison with the Conversion of the least Bit or Drop of those beggarly Elements of Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, to which his Soul and Divinity shall be united. Every little Priest in the Church of *Rome* is able (they tell us) to do this, twenty Times a Day, or as often as he thinks fit. And how will such a Person be revered? What a profound Veneration will he be regarded with by all who can bring themselves to believe that he really does these great and marvellous Things.

Now for another of their Doctrines, which is as admirably contrived to keep the *Laity* in Subjection to, and Dependance on the *Clergy*, as the before mentioned is, to procure them Honour and Reverence. I mean their Doctrine (for it was positively defined in two of their Councils, those of *Constance* and *Trent*, and has had the Sanction of some of their Popes) that the Intention of the Minister, to do what the Church does, is necessary to the Validity of the Sacraments. The Purport of which Doctrine is, that neither Baptism, nor the Eucharist, nor any other Sacrament, (for divers other Things are esteemed Sacraments in that Church) are real Sacraments, but mere Nullities, if the Priest, administering the same, secretly intends

they should be such, notwithstanding the Action wherewith they are administred be performed by him with the greatest outward Seriousness and Solemnity, and the exactest Conformity to the Rules and Orders of the Church. Is not this now a most enslaving Doctrine? Is it not manifestly calculated to keep the People in the most absolute Subjection to the Priests? For if their eternal Interests are so much in his Power as this Doctrine represents them to be, they had need take care to be well with him. If he should be so evil-minded (which an incensed wicked Man, nay, only a wanton, a morose, a hypocondriacal, or atheistical one, though no way incensed, may be easily supposed to be) if he (I say) when he goes about to baptise one of their Infant Children, should take it into his Head to say within himself,—*This Administration I am resolved shall have no Effect, and though I celebrate with Water in the Name of the three divine Persons, and more than that, though I use the Exorcisms or Sufflations, to drive out the Devil, fill with Salt the Mouth of the baptised, smear his Ears and Nostrils with my Spittle, anoint his Crown with the Chrism, and put the burning Wax-light in his Hand, yet I do not intend it should be a Baptism*, what a fine Condition will he be left in! He is plainly cheated of his Christianity. And with respect to the *Eucharist*, if, when he makes a Shew of consecrating, he does not *inwardly intend* it should be a Consecration, but means that the Bread should be Bread still, the Communicants are not only defrauded of the Sacrament, but, which is much worse, are involved, and that by the Confession of many of themselves,

ⁱn a Sin of the most dreadful Nature. For they own, that the Worship of the Host, if 'tis not really consecrated and converted into the Body of *Christ*, would be Idolatry. So also, in the Sacrament of *Penance*, the Penitent is not absolved; in *Orders*, no Character is imprinted; in *Confirmation*, *Matrimony*, and *extreme Unction*, no Grace is given, or Sin forgiven, if the Priest is so cross and perverse, as not to intend it. If he can bring the People to believe this, he has absolutely subdued them to him. For who will be so fool-hardy, as to offend one, who, they believe, has it in his Power either to dispense, or to withhold from them the ordinary Means appointed by God for their Salvation, just as he pleases, and that too, without their knowing which of these he is pleased to do.

The Doctrine of the Necessity of auricular Confession, and of the Manner wherein it ought to be made, is also a wonderful Invention of that Church to keep the World in Subjection to it. The Doctrine is, that every Christian is indispensably bound to confess *all* his Sins in Thought, Word, and Deed, at least once a Year, to a Priest, with all the Circumstances that can either increase, or diminish the Guilt, or any way alter the Nature of them; and their Practice is accordingly. By these Means, they get into the Secrets of Courts, of Families, and particular Persons, and come to the Knowledge of all the Thefts, Perjuries, Murthers, and Adulteries that are committed; nay, all the criminal Designs and Desires of all the Men and Women round about them. And if, with this

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Advantage, they cannot manage and govern them, and make them subservient to all their worldly or carnal Purposes, they are poor Managers indeed, poorer Managers for their own Interests and Designs, than the Popish Clergy, in common, are reputed to be.

One Thing more I have yet to observe, that, while these Doctrines and Practices are contrived to subject to their Power all *Secular* Persons, they have had as lucky a Hand in contriving others whereby to keep all *Secular* Persons from having, by way of Cheque, any Power at all over *them*. Such is the Doctrine condemning Priests' Marriage, and the Law imposing Celibacy upon them. By this they are not only enriched and greatned, (upon which Account it might well have been reckon'd amongst the lucrative Articles before spoken of) but made, in a manner, independent, not only upon all about them, but their own Sovereigns also, and the Laws of their Country. It is a very significant, as well as true Saying, that *he who marries gives Hostages to the Publick for his good Behaviour*. Wife and Children, the dearest Objects of his Love, will generally keep him from embracing any Interest opposite to that of his Country, and engaging himself in any Plots or Schemes that shall be set on Foot, subversive of, or detrimental to it, as well knowing, that *in the Peace thereof, he, and his Family, shall have Peace*. But an unmarried Priest, especially, if he be of the *Roman* Communion, what cares he for one Country more than another, and when his own grows too hot for him, he can easily withdraw, and transport

sport himself into another, where he may live and serve at the Altar, as well as in his own; (which by the way, is, in all likelihood, one of the main Reasons why their Service is still kept in *Latin*.) This is all the Inconvenience a *Romish* Priest can apprehend from raising the Jealousy, or incurring the Displeasure of a *Protestant* Government. But if the Government be *Roman Catholic*, no Inconvenience at all is likely to ensue; for he may, *there*, stand his Ground, and face his Sovereign, upon the Plea, that his Goods and Person are exempted from all *secular* Jurisdiction, in which Pretension he will not fail to be supported, by a mighty foreign Power, whom his Sovereign himself reveres, and stands in Awe of. For you are to know that contrary to the Doctrine of *St. Paul*, who teaches that “*every Soul is to be subject to the higher Powers,*” it is maintained by the Church of *Rome*, that the Clergy are exempted, and not subject to them; and *Roman Catholic* States tamely submit to this Pretension; insomuch that a Priest convict of Felony, or Homicide, or any grievous Offence of the like Nature, cannot suffer the Law, till he has been degraded by his Ordinary, if indeed his Ordinary shall be pleased to condescend to degrade him, and deliver him up, to the *secular* Power, to be punished. And *Becket*, Archbishop of *Canterbury*, for his strenuous asserting of this Immunity of the Clergy from the temporal Laws, was canonized, and is now adored, as one of the greatest of Saints, in the *Roman* Church.

And now, let any one consider, if such a System of Doctrines and Practices, harmoniously con-

spiring to serve the secular Interests of the Priesthood, at the Expence of the christian Laity, can reasonably be thought to come from *the Author and Finisher of our Faith*. For though Reason and Equity, and indeed common Justice, plainly require, and our Lord has, accordingly, ordained, that they who serve at the Altar should live of the Altar, and though he has given to the Pastors and Governors of his Church so much Power and Authority, as is requisite to maintain the Peace and Unity thereof, and to set forward the Salvation of Men, yet it would be thinking very unworthily of him, to suppose, he has delivered so many Doctrines, set up so many Pretensions, and contrived so many Arts and Tricks, as, under the Pretence of his Authority, are received and practised in the Church of *Rome*, to fetch Money out of the Pockets of Lay-Christians, and put it into those of the Priests; or that it was ever in his Intention, that his Priests should exalt themselves *above all that is called God*, and that Kings and Emperors, and all the Rulers of the World, should be trampled down under their Feet. Is it to be thought he would thus sacrifice his People to his Priests? or, that he has calculated his Religion for the Benefit or separate Interests of a small Party of Men, to the Oppression and Slavery of all the other Followers and Professors of it? He who thinks so, thinks very meanly and dishonourably of him, and will soon come to consider him as a Cheat, imposing upon the World a Religion contrived and devised to help those who are to serve in it, to Ease and Opulence, Pomp and Power, and to keep every
body

body else in the most slavish Dependance on them. Therefore I don't wonder that in *Italy*, and, particularly at *Rome*, where every one is taught from his Childhood, and firmly believes, these are the genuine Doctrines and Institutions of Christianity, *Atheism* and *Infidelity* had its first rise, and chief Residence, it being natural for observing and sagacious Men to suspect a Religion which is so visibly partial to the Priesthood, that it may seem to be made chiefly with a View to their Benefit and Aggrandizement. We of the *Protestant Religion* (God be thanked) are under no Temptations of this Kind to Unbelief, having no such Doctrines and Practices as these among us, and looking upon those in the Church of *Rome*, as no Parts of the true Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, but unwarrantable Assurements, Additions to, and Corruptions of it. The only reasonable Effect they can have upon us, is, to make us suspect and beware of a Church, which plainly appears to have more regard to the *temporal Advantages* of her *Priests*, than the *eternal Welfare* of her *People*,—or to the *Glory of God*.

SECT. IV.

Wherein is shewn, that the Frauds and Impostures of that Church are also a reasonable Objection against it.

BY the Frauds and Impostures of the *Roman* Church, I would be understood to mean, in this Section, no more than those fraudulent Contrivances and Devices which are used, tolerated, and authorized therein, with a View to support the Practices and Pretensions, to gain Credit and Belief

lief to the peculiar Doctrines, and to countenance
 the Devotions of it. Divers of these have been
 already, occasionally touched upon, such as the
 Visions and Revelations pretended to be vouchsafed
 to some of their Saints, the extraordinary Commu-
 nications and personal Conferences they gave them-
 selves out to have had with *Jesus Christ*, the *Virgin*
Mary, the *Patriarchs*, the *Prophets*, and other *Saints*,
 now in Heaven, for the Truth of which the Popes
 have often condescended to make themselves Vouch-
 ers; also the monstrous Stories that are told in
 their *Legends*, and particularly that of the *holy*
House, wherein the *Virgin Mary* lived, and the
 Child *Jesus* was brought up, carried by Angels,
 through the Air, from *Judaea* to *Dalmatia*, and
 from thence again into *Italy*, where it now stands,
 a Fiction so ridiculous, and so impudent an Imposi-
 tion upon the Folly and Credulity of Mankind,
 as has scarcely ever been offered to the World, and
 is not to be paralleled, unless, perchance, it should
 be in the Story before mentioned of the twelve A-
 postles being carried through the Air from the dif-
 ferent Parts of the World, to be present at the
 Death of the *Virgin Mary*, or by the Night-journey
 of *Mahomet*, under the Conduct of the Angel
Gabriel, upon the back of the Beast *Alborack*, and
 by the Help of a Ladder of Light, up to the se-
 venth Heaven; wherein it must be confessed, the
Eastern Prophet has rather outdone the *Western*
Priests, in the Wildness and Extravagance of his
 Invention.

But as the Frauds and Impostures of that Church
 are no less numerous than her Superstitions, I think
 I must

I must take the same Course, in speaking of these, that I before took, in speaking of the other; that is, confine myself to one or two of them, by way of Specimen, passing by the rest.—And these shall be,—their Frauds and Artifices to cozen the People into a Belief of *Purgatory*,—And the Miracles pretended to be done in that Church, to induce a Belief of its being the *true* Church or of some of the particular Doctrines of it.

There being, in Scripture, scarcely the Shadow of a Proof, and, in the Writings of the primitive Church, no mention at all, of the *Romish Purgatory*, the *Papists* are forced (for 'tis a Doctrine of comfortable Importance to the Priesthood, and not to be easily given up) to have Recourse to Arts and Frauds, to maintain the Belief and Credit of it amongst the People. The Pictures of Souls in the Flames of *Purgatory*, with all the Appearance of insufferable Pain and Anguish under them, are common to be seen. These are not only the Books of the unlearned, to teach them what *Purgatory* is, but also the Proofs of the Truth and Reality of the Thing. For the simple People, as they are apt to believe all they read in *Print*, so also every thing they see in *Paint*, and have no Suspicion, scarce any Conception, that the *Pencil*, any more than the *Press*, would be employed to propagate Notions of this Kind, if there was, in Reality, no Truth in them. But what they most of all rely upon for the Proof of the Existence of a *Purgatory*, are, certain Stories of Dreams, Visions, Revelations, Voices in the Air, but more especially Apparitions of Souls departed, to give their
Friends,

Friends, and others, an Account of it. A dead Man appears to one, seeming to threaten him, because he did not say *Mass* for the *Dead*, as well as for the *Living*: Another appears, giving an Account of his being in *Purgatory*, because, he, too, when living, had been negligent in that Matter: Another, being dead, her Soul (it was *St. Christina*) was presently conveyed to *Purgatory*, to give her a Sight of the horrible Torments that are suffered there; and then, being carried to *Heaven*, and placed before the Throne of God, she had her Option given her, whether she would remain there, for ever, in Glory, or return to Life, to labour for the Deliverance of the poor Souls she had seen suffer such dreadful Punishments. She had so tender a feeling of their Sufferings, that she chose the latter; and from that Time to the Day of her second Death, she performed the most amazing Penances and Mortifications for their Redemption. The Sister of the great *St. Thomas Aquinas*, as the Reverend Father *Ribadeneyra* assures us, appeared to him, and told him she was in *Purgatory*, desiring the Assistance of his Prayers and Sacrifices. Accordingly he helped her to all the Prayers and *Masses* he could, both of his own, and of others. And in a few Days she appeared again, to thank him for the Benefit they had procured for her, being now entered into Glory. And indeed we are told of Abundance of Instances of Men and Women, who, after being delivered from the Pains of *Purgatory* by the Prayers of Monks, Priests, and others, have made their Appearance to their Friends and Benefactors, gratefully acknowledging the Relief

lief they had obtained for them. There is, in a small Treatise, entitled, *Purgatory proved by Miracles*, a pretty large Collection of Stories of this Kind, taken from Popish Writers, some of them *Popes* and *Cardinals*, and others of great Eminence in the Church. And if a Gleaning were made of all that is recorded, touching these Matters, by Writers of that Communion, we might be fairly allowed to use the *hyperbolical* Expressions of *St. John* concerning the Things which *Jesus* did, if they should be written, every one, the World itself could not contain the Books that should be written. Now let us see what we are to think of these Things.

It can hardly be thought that these Apparitions are the real Spirits of the Faithful departed hence in the Lord, and undergoing, at that Time, in *Purgatory*, the temporal Punishment remaining yet due to their Sins, in order to their entring into Heaven. For is not *Purgatory* (if there be such a Place) their Prison? Do not the *Romanists* themselves hold it to be such? The Words of *St. Luke* xii. 59.—*Lest thy Adversary hale thee to the Judge, and the Judge deliver thee to the Officer, and the Officer cast thee into Prison; I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last Mite,* these Words (I say) are understood (weakly enough indeed) by many of the *Romanists*, of the Prison of *Purgatory*; as the Spirits in Prison, whom *Christ* is said by *St. Peter* to have gone and preached to, are supposed (ridiculously enough again) to mean the Souls that are detained there; which, methinks, is not very consistent with the Multitude of Stories they tell us, of the Spirits of Men being

being often released from thence, to make their Appearance on Earth, and implore the Prayers of the Living for their Deliverance. But 'tis easy for Men who are in Error, and have not the Truth, to believe Things which do not hang very well together. What should have more Weight to persuade us, that these Apparitions, Visions, and Voices, which the *Papists* tell us so much of, touching that Place of Torment, do not come from the Souls of the righteous detached from thence to implore the Help of our Prayers, is this, that we hear nothing of them down from *Adam* to about the Days of *Gregory* the Great. If the Prayers of the Living were so prevalent for their Deliverance, how is it, that in all *that* Time, which was four or five thousand Years, no one Soul, that we read of, ever appeared on Earth, to sollicite for them. No, nor after *that* Time, down to *this*, in any other Parts of the Christian World, besides those that follow the *Roman Catholic* Religion. How comes it to pass, that the Souls of those who have died in the Communion of the *Protestant*, the *Greek*, or other *Eastern* Churches, have never been known to leave *Purgatory* (for sure some of them go thither) and shew themselves to their surviving Friends, to help their Unbelief, to convince them of the Reality of such a Place, and of the Efficacy their Prayers would have, if they would only be so charitable, as to offer up to God a few of them, for their Deliverance. What is it makes *them* content with being kept in Durance, till their appointed Time shall come; while hundreds, or thousands, of *Po-pish* Souls are daily (they see) released, before their
Time,

Time, by Prayers and Masses, which the good Priests and Monks, and other devout People in their Church, are continually offering to God, in their behalf? No reasonable Account, I apprehend, can be given of this; but the Truth of the Matter seems to be, about the Time of the Pope before mentioned, the *Fable of Purgatory* was hammering out, and the People began to have some Notion of it. Then, to bear it up, and to make them take to it the more kindly, either these Pranks were played by wicked and lying Spirits, to give Credit to so pernicious an Opinion; or effected by the Management of Men; or else Monks and Priests, such as *Gregory* and *Bede*, coolly invented them, to comply with the Humour of the People, as many others, afterwards, did, to feed the Covetousness of the Priests.

The same, in the main, may, I believe, be said, concerning the Miracles or Wonders, with which that Church is pretended to be signalized. The greatest Part of them were never done, but are ar-rant Fictions and Inventions, like the Adventures and Exploits of *Amadis de Gaul*, or *Don Quixot*. And of those that have really been done, some, in all Probability, have been done by the Agency of wicked Spirits, who, be sure, will be ready enough to exert all the Power they are endowed with, and God shall be pleased to give them the Liberty to exert, to give Credit to so corrupt a Church, and to such false and pernicious Doctrines, as they are meant to be alledged in Confirmation of. Others, doubtless, are managed by Men, Monks, and Priests, and other interested Persons; and some of the Ar-tifices

tifices whereby they have been effected have been discovered, and publickly exposed; particularly, we have been told of some of their knavish Tricks to make Images speak, and Crucifixes weep. And where so many Tricks are attempted to be put upon the World for true Miracles, it is no way likely that any true Miracles should be found; And *Protestants*, surely, are as excusable in shewing no Regard to any of the Miracles of the *Roman* Church, for the Sake of the many Impostures which are well known, and confessed by many of themselves, to have been practised there, as the *Jews* would have been, in suspecting or slighting all the Miracles of our Saviour, and of his Apostles, in case they had been caught in so many Frauds and Rogueries of this Kind, as the *Romanists* have been.

But there are other plain Marks and Characters of Imposture upon the *Roman* Miracles: They are too many of them to be likely to be true. There is no Proportion between the Number of those which are said to have been wrought in the three first Centuries, and any three of the later Centuries which were most fruitful of them. There are, it may be, a hundred, pretended and recorded to have been done in these Ages, to one that was done in the other. Is this reasonable to believe, supposing them done by the Hand of God? Now, that Christianity is so firmly established, and so powerfully supported in the World, and Miracles are little, if at all, needed, can any rational Man think it likely, that more real Miracles should be done, than at its first appearing, when,
without

without many and great Miracles, it would have been impossible to maintain itself, amidst all the Difficulties it laboured under. Does the Gardener use to bestow more Watering upon a Plant, after it has taken deep Root and fastening in the Earth, than when it was first put into it?

Many of the Miracles of the *Roman* Church are also such childish and fantastical Performances, and attended with Circumstances so extremely ridiculous, as to be altogether unworthy of the Finger of God, and fit only for sporting Dæmons to entertain themselves, and delude men, with. And, which is another Prejudice against them, the greatest Part of them are plainly calculated to give Credit and Confirmation, not, like the primitive Miracles, to the Gospel of *Christ*, and common Christianity, but to the Peculiarities, the extravagant Pretensions, the false Doctrines, the corrupt Practices, and *fondly invented* Superstitions of that Church; and the more extravagant any Pretension, the more absurd any Doctrine, the more corrupt any Practice, or the more fond, and foolish any Superstition is, the more Miracles, be sure, are always wrought, in Support of it.

Another very suspicious Circumstance attending them, is, that as there is scarce a Miracle recorded in the Scriptures, but some one or other of the *Romish* Saints have done the same, so it is, for the most part, with an Addition of some Circumstance, to make a Miracle appear greater than a scriptural one. If *the* Servants of the most high God, *Sba-drach, Meshach, and Abednego, walked in the midst, and came forth of the burning fiery Furnace, where-*

into they had been cast, because (pray mark it) they would not fall down, and *worship the Image, which Nebuchadnezzar the King had set up*, did not *St. Severus*, a *French* Bishop, go into the Oven of a poor Widow, after it had been heated, on a much slighter Occasion, and stay there, without receiving the least Hurt, all the while her Batch of Bread was baking, her Peel, it seems, being unluckily burnt, and she having at Hand no other Means, than by his Assistance, to get her Bread out? If our Saviour walked upon the Sea, two of the *Romish* Saints are said to have done much the same thing, one of them crossing it upon a great Stone, the other (with fifteen more) standing upon a Mantle, the Mantle all the while, not in the least wetted. *St. Patrick* fasted forty Days, as our Saviour did: *St. Ardan* did more; for he fasted fifty, and, which is yet more, grew fat upon it. Any one may see, that these, (and doubtless fifty other Instances of the like Sort might be produced, if one were to romage the Lives, and Acts of the *Romish* Saints) these are only Copies, taken by wicked Spirits, (who love to ape and imitate the Works of God) or by Cheats and Impostors, or by fabling Life-mongers, from the Scripture Originals; but with a manifest Affectation, by the Addition or Variation of one Circumstance or other, of out-doing them.

But the most insuperable Objection to these Miracles, and which lies, too, universally against them all, is, that they are done in the dark, very privately, in religious Houses, and other Places of Retirement in far distant Countries, whither they
are

Church of Rome just and well-grounded. 211

are sure no body will go to disprove them, or else in *Roman Catholic*, superstitious Countries, where none are inclined, at least none dare either dispute or examine them. “ In *Cbina*, and *Japan* (says “ the late Bishop *Atterbury*) these Wonder-workers “ may pretend to have done as many Miracles as “ they please, without the Fear of a Discovery; “ in *Spain* and *Italy*, they may venture, now and “ then, to set up for them, where there are so “ many always ready to favour their Pretences, “ and to run into any pious Frauds that can be “ contrived for them. But in heretical Countries “ (as they term ours) they are very shy, and sparing of their Talent this way; and still the more “ Herefy there is in a Country, the fewer Miracles “ are heard of there. How can a Man chuse but “ suspect these odd Stories, told under such suspicious Circumstances? How can he be blamed “ for not entertaining them [r] ?”

What they pretend to say for their Miracles being done in very remote Countries, or, if nearer home, among themselves only, is this,—We are unworthy they should be done amongst *us*, being so ill disposed to receive them, as *St. Matthew* tells us of our Saviour, that *he did not do many mighty Works* among his own Croutrymen, *because of their Unbelief*, *Matt. xiii. 58.* But how is this? Are *we* more unworthy to have Miracles done before *us*, or worse disposed to admit the Evidence of them, than the *Chinese*, or *Japonese*, or *Persian* Idolaters, among whom, if you give any Credit

[r] Sermon on Acts xxvi. 26.

to the Accounts of their Missionaries, they are done almost every Day? We are indeed, I do believe, a little better qualified, than they, to judge of Miracles, to distinguish the true from the false, and should not be, I fancy, so easily disposed to receive the Doctrine of any *Roman* Missionary, upon his only telling us, that Heaven was displeased with us for having so long rejected it, and, as a Token of its Displeasure, the Sun on such a Day, and such an Hour of the Day, shall be darkned, or that the Moon, on such a Night, and precisely at such a Time of it, shall not give her Light. 'Tis likely, we should not receive, with so charming a Simplicity as a poor *Indian* Idolater may do, a regular Eclipse of the Sun, or Moon, foretold and threatned by a *Romish* Missionary, or any other natural Effect, or Juggling Trick, performed by him, as a Sign or Miracle, in Attestation to the Truth of the Doctrines he should teach us. And this is our Unworthiness: This is the Thing that keeps the *Glory* of the *Roman* Miracles from shining upon us. But as to *real* and *divine* Miracles, every one who knows us will believe, we should as readily receive *them*, as any Nation, even the *Jews* themselves, to whom they have been vouchsafed in the greatest Plenty. Let any *Romish* Missionary first propose the Doctrine he teaches, and the Truth he would have us believe and receive from him; for Instance, that the Church of *Rome* is the only true Church of *Christ*, or that *Transubstantiation* is a true Doctrine, and the Adoration of the Host a lawful Worship; then, let him declare, he is about to work a great Miracle, in Confirmation of it,
for

for Example, raise a dead Man to Life, give Sight to one whom every body knows to have been born blind, or to feed and satisfy five thousand of *us* with only five Loaves and two small Fishes, and let him, then, do these Miracles, or any one of them, before our Eyes, and we will believe. Our Saviour and his Apostles proceeded this Way; first publishing their Doctrine, and Commission to teach it, then working many and great Miracles, at the same Time openly declaring, that those Miracles were meant, by God and themselves, to give Credit and Authority thereto. Nor were their Miracles done in a Corner, among themselves only, or those who were already of their Party, and attached to them, to whom they could be of no Use; Miracles being (as the Apostle observes) *a Sign, not to them that already believe, but to them that believe not.* No, they were generally done before the promiscuous Multitude, most of them Enemies; and if it is said of our Saviour, that, in his own Country, and among his own Kin, *he did not do many mighty Works, because of their Unbelief,* there is, in those very Words, the plainest Implication, that he did *some*; and the Reason why he did not do *more*, was his knowing, either by the Knowledge he had of the Hearts of all Men, or by the Experience he had had of their contemptuously rejecting, and setting at Naught, *the beginning of Miracles* he had made among them, that though he should *manifest forth his Glory*, and multiply his Miracles ever so much, among them, they would have no Effect, and work no Conviction.

From this short View of the Miracles of the *Roman* Church, 'tis plain, they can be considered in no other Light than as bold and impudent Pretences, notorious Cheats and Impostures, either of Men, or Devils, or of both. And what, then, can we think of a Church which sets them up, and would impose them upon us, as an infallible Note, whereby she may be discerned to be the only true Church of *Christ*? How far *the Glory of Miracles*, supposing them to be true, is a Mark of the true Church, it will be needless to enquire. But this is certain, and sufficient for *my* Purpose, that forged and counterfeit Miracles, especially when found in such Abundance, and so authorized, as they are, in the Church of *Rome*, are a pretty sure Mark of a false one.

S E C T. V.

Shewing that the Forgeries, the Purgings, and Corruptions of Authors, antient and modern, practised by the Roman Church, are a just Objection against it.

WE come now to give you a short View of another Imposture, which is yet, if possible, more infamous, and dishonourable to the *Roman* Church, a stronger Ground of Suspicion, or rather, a surer Sign of its having departed from the Purity and Simplicity of the Christian Faith, than any of those which have been yet mentioned. They have composed many spurious and counterfeit Writings, and put them off, under antient and venerable Names: They have corrupted the true and genuine Writings both of the Antients, and Moderns, not only altering, in their Editions, some

Passages,

Passages, but adding, or throwing out others; and this, not as it sometimes happens in other Books, without any corrupt and malicious Design, in the Boldness or Wantonness of Criticism, but in cool and deliberate Knavery, with a manifest View of supporting the Claims, the Doctrines, or Practices of their Church, or undermining the Tenets, and Opinions of Protestants. And this any one will perceive, who observes the Differences in such Passages as have been altered, and the Doctrine or Matter contained in those that have been foisted in, or blotted out.

It is well known that Treatises have been forged, and sent into the World, under the Names of eminent Persons who lived as well in the first Century, as the succeeding ones; *Abdias*, Bishop of *Babylon*; *Linus*, *Clemens*, *Dionysius the Areopagite*, *Ignatius*, *Justin Martyr*, *Cyprian*, *Augustin*, *Hierom*, and many others, which though now, the most learned *Papists* have been forced to give up, as manifestly spurious, and not the Productions of those whose Names they bear, are, nevertheless, quoted, by others of them, without Fear or Shame, in Controversial, and popular Compositions. And if we consider the Use that is made of them, and how frequently they are urged, (whether pertinently, or not, I am not now to enquire) to prove the Authenticity of the *apocryphal* Books, the Supremacy of *St. Peter*, and the Bishops of *Rome*, *Transubstantiation*, *Purgatory*, and *Prayer for the Dead to release them from it*, the *Invocation of Saints*, the *Worship of Reliques*, and of the *Cross*, the *propitiatory Sacrifice of the Mass*, the *Antiquity*, and Cere-

216 *Protestant Objections against the*
monies thereof, the Shaving and Celibacy of Priests,
Auricular Confession, the immaculate Conception of the
Virgin Mary, and her Assumption into Heaven, the
Power of Exorcists, the Orders of Monks, the Supe-
riority of Popes, and even Priests, to Kings; and
 twenty other things that are favourite Points in the
Roman Church; if we consider (I say) that the
 proving of *these* Points is the principal Use that is
 made of those spurious Books, we shall easily guess
 from what Forge they have, most of them, come,
 and with what Views they were indited. But
 these Frauds I only mention, and shall not insist
 upon. The famous Donation of *Constantine*, and
 the *Decretal Epistles* of the *Popes* are such flagrant
 and glaring Impostures, as will serve my Purpose,
 as well as a thousand.

The Donation of *Constantine* is an Instrument
 whereby it is pretended, that Emperor granted to
Silvester, and his Successors, Bishops of *Rome*, the
 absolute Sovereignty of that City, with divers ap-
 pendant Provinces in *Italy*. Yet, 'tis certain, that
Constantius, the immediate Successor of *Constantine*,
 knew nothing of that Donation. For he not only
 had his Prefect, or Governor, at *Rome*, but or-
 dered him to seize *Liberius*, the Pope, and sen-
 tenced him to Banishment. *Prætextatus* was also
 Governor of *Rome*, under the Emperor *Valentinian*;
Symmachus, under *Honorius*. And Pope *Boniface*,
 having been driven from *Rome* by that Emperor,
 and afterwards recalled, speaks, in his Letter of
 Thanks to him, of that City, as *his Majesty's*
City [/]. And indeed, it is plain, that the Bishops

[/] In urbe vestræ mansuetudinis.

of

of *Rome* did never exercise, or claim, any temporal Jurisdiction or Sovereignty there, till the Days of *Pepin*, and *Charlemaine*, which, one must believe, they would not have forborn to do, had they been able to produce any *Donation* from *Constantine*, of this Sort. It does not seem to have appeared in the World, till the ninth Century. For they tell us, that *Hincmar*, Archbishop of *Rheims*, who lived about the middle of that Century, is the first who takes Notice of it. When it came out, it came out in such false and impure *Latin*, as is glaringly inconsistent with the Times of *Constantine*, and plainly discovers its Birth and Production to have been in the middle Ages: It came out, too, full of *Chronological* Blunders; and such evident Marks of Falsification appear all over it, as shew the Writer of it to have been one of the greatest Bunglers in Forgery that ever took up that Trade. But no matter; the Popes and their Partisans resolved to hold up and support the Imposture, as long as they were able. And they were able to do it for many Centuries, by Reason of the Ignorance of those Times. And even *Bellarmino* himself, notwithstanding all that had been said by *Laurentius Valla*, and others, to expose the Forgery, reckons *Constantine* [1] among those excellent Princes, by whom the Bishops of *Rome* have been adorned and enriched with temporal Principalities and Dominions; which he could not have done on any other Account, than of the Grant or *Donation* we are talking of. Though 'tis true

[1] De Rom. Pont. Lib. v. c. 9.

too, and we must do him the Justice to own, that when, in the same Chapter, he was asserting the Right of the Popes to the temporal Dominions they possess, he had a little more Modesty and Discretion than to make a *particular* and *express* Mention of this Grant of *Constantine*, as he does of those of *Charlemaine* and his Son *Lewis*.

The Decretal Epistles were given out, and supposed, to have been written by a Succession of the Bishops of *Rome*, down from *Clemens* as low, I think, as Pope *Deusdedit*, in the Beginning of the seventh Century, for determining of Causes, answering Questions, and deciding Controversies in Religion. But these, too, are arrant and manifest Forgeries. The common Opinion and Joke is, that they are the *Wares* of *Isidorus Mercator*, who lived in the eighth Century. But whether he, or *Riculphus*, Archbishop of *Mentz*, in whose Collection they first appeared, was the Forger, Forgeries they are for certain, and came out of the Mint about that Time; as the *Latin*, in the Epistles of the earliest Popes, as well as of the later, being modern and barbarous in many Places, and very different from that which was spoken at *Rome* in their Days, plainly shews. And there are other plain Marks of Forgery upon them,—As the Quotations, or Transcripts from Authors which did not come into the World, till many Years after the Death of those Popes in whose Epistles they are found:—The many absurd Arguings, and ridiculous Uses and Applications of Scripture, unworthy of Men so well versed and learned in the Scriptures, as many of the primitive Popes were,
—But,

—But, above all, the Matter of these Epistles, not at all suitable to the State of the Church at the Time when they are supposed to have been written. For how is it possible (for Example) that the true *Clemens*, and other primitive Bishops of the *Roman Church*, should talk, as they do, of *Archdeacons*, *Metropolitans*, and *Patriarchs*, who did not come into the Church 'till several Ages after; and that they should speak such *great swelling Words* concerning the *Supremacy*, Appeals to *Rome*, and I know not what, when every body knows the Truth of what *Aeneas Sylvius* honestly confessed, that in some of the first Ages, little Regard was had to that See. This evidently shews, not only that these Epistles were forged, but also by whom, and with what Views, namely, by some Well-wishers to the Church of *Rome*, to give an Air of Antiquity to the Usurpations, and Innovations of that Church. *Baronius* owns the Forgery; but he would not have you think the Church of *Rome* was guilty of it. Who should be guilty of it, but those who get by it? Whether it was done by the express Procurement, or Direction, of those at the Head of that Church, or what Hand they had in it, one cannot say. But that it was done to serve the Interest thereof, no body can doubt, when he considers, how frequently and fulsomely the Papal Supremacy, and other Corruptions, which were then newly brought, or bringing into it, are inculcated therein. This, however, is certain, that the Imposture was no sooner play'd off, and these Epistles brought into the World, than that Church fondly receiv'd, and made the proper Use of

of them. *Hincmar* of *Rheims* had, in an ignorant Age, enough Sense and Learning plainly to perceive they were an impudent Forgery, and Honesty enough to write against them; for which he was maligned and persecuted by the Pope, and forced to retract the Censure he had passed upon them. They were transcribed into the Body of the Canon-Law: They were quoted, as good Authorities, for the Antiquity and Truth of the *Romish* Doctrines, and Pretensions, till the Revival of Learning, when it was plainly seen, and could not but be acknowledged by the learned *Romanists* themselves, that they were only a Counterfeit and spurious Production, though some still contended for their Genuineness and Authenticity, quoted them upon Occasion, which they continue yet to do, when they know, or think they are concerned with Men who are not well apprized of the Imposition they are putting upon them. The *Romanists* are apt to tell us, we should not upbraid them with a Forgery, which they, or most of them, have now given up. But we thank them for *that*. It would be something indeed, if they would now renounce the Supremacy and *Despotism* of the Pope, with all the other Claims, Practices, and Doctrines of the Church, which these Epistles were forged, and have been constantly used, for the Support of. But what does it signify, or what Satisfaction can it give us, that the Cheat is now confessed? No more than it would give you, that the Knave now confesses the Forgery of a Deed, whereby your Estate was wrested from you, after he has been in Possession of it so long that there is no Way to recover it; or that

that the Scaffolding is taken down, after the Fortrefs, for the erecting of which it was set up, is completely finished, and playing continually upon you.

The False-dealing of that Church is as notorious, and not less scandalous, in purging and corrupting the genuine Writings of the Fathers and others, than in trumping up, and imposing upon the World, spurious ones, for true and genuine. If any eminent Writer of their own Communion in the later Ages, has been so ingenuous as to speak favourably of *Protestants*, or, compelled by the Evidence of Truth, has made them any Concessions in Points of Doctrine and Opinion, or spoken disrespectfully of Popes or Cardinals, or thought himself obliged to abate something of the high Claims and Pretensions of the Church, or delivered his Sense freely against the Abuses and Corruptions that have been brought into it, it was almost sure those Passages would be altered, or clean struck out. *Laurentius Valla*, *Cardinal Cajetan*, *Erasmus*, *Cassander*, and many others have been thus served. The Fathers themselves have not escaped the same Treatment. They, as well as the Moderns, have been garbled, and this, too, by Authority. It is almost incredible that a Number of Men of Rank and Dignity in the Church, should be appointed and employed by Popes and Councils in such dirty and infamous Work. And accordingly, many of the Papists (for the Business was carried on, as all Works of Darkeness are used to be, with great Secrecy) would not believe, for some Time, there was any such Thing, but thought it a Slander, when they were told of it. However, the Mystery of Iniquity was soon revealed,

vealed, and the *Expurgatory Indices*, or Catalogues of Books to be purged or inhibited, were quickly in all Hands. And when the Matter could be no longer denied, or doubted of, it was excused or justified. To handle the Fathers in this Manner was not, it seems, a *mortal* Crime. For they are not *Fathers*, but *Fathers in Law*, says the Jesuit *Gretser*, if they teach any other Doctrine than the Church teaches and maintains. But let them be Fathers, or what they will, to *us*; they are but the *Sons of the Church*, who, therefore, *in the Right of a Mother*, may *correct* them.

Neither have Synods and Councils fared better. For as they have set out some (such as the Synod pretended to be held at *Antioch* under the very Apostles, and that at *Sinnessa*) which were forged and counterfeit, so they have stifled and suppressed others, that were genuine, and also corrupted many of those which they did not think fit wholly to suppress. And if they have not been as free with the holy Scriptures, as they have been with the Fathers and Councils, and purged away from *them* all offensive and displeasing Passages, there are plain Indications, that it was not for Want of Good-will, but of Power and Opportunity. Their leaving out the second Commandment, against setting up Images to worship them, from many of their Catechisms and Manuals [1], plainly shews their In-

[1] The better to conceal their Prevarication in this Matter, and lest some good Catholics, who might possibly have heard of *ten* Commandments, which God delivered to *Moses* on Mount *Sinai*, should wonder and enquire what was become of one of them, and be scandalized at the Suppression of it, they have contrived, after throwing out the second, to make up the Num-
clination,

clination, and that, they would not stick at leaving it out of their Bibles, if they dared to do it. But as to altering of their Bible, upon slight and frivolous Grounds, in favour of their peculiar Superstitions, they have actually made some Essays that Way. Witness their changing—*It shall bruise the Serpent's Head* (meaning the Seed of the Woman) into—*She shall bruise the Serpent's Head*, in Complaisance to the *Virgin Mary*, and to give her the Honour which belongs properly to her Son, *Jesus Christ*.

Good Heavens! what melancholy Reflections must any thinking Man have, when he sets himself *ten*, by dividing the last into two Commandments,—thus.

IX. Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, &c.

And that they might not, after the second Commandment has been discovered, exceed *ten*, they pretend that the second is not a different Commandment from the first, but only an Explanation of, or *Appendix* to it. And if it really was no more than an *Appendix* to, or Explanation of the first, that is no Reason for dropping it, but rather, sure, a very good one for inserting it in a Catechism. And if God, when he delivered the ten Commandments to the Children of *Israel*, as a *Law*, thought it proper to add to the first the Explanation of it, it must be, sure, very improper to omit that Explanation, when put into the Hands of Youth, and ignorant Persons, as an *Instruction* only. It is sometimes pretended, that this Explanation is omitted for Brevity's Sake, the setting down of the bare Precept being sufficient. But why then was it not thought sufficient to set down barely the preceptive Part in some of the other Commandments, and why, for Brevity's Sake, was not the Reason given, in the fourth Commandment, for God's instituting the Sabbath, *For in six Days*, &c. and the Promise annexed to the fifth, *that thy Days may be long*, &c. Why were not these omitted also? 'Tis a plain Case, that the omitting of this Explanation (if it were only such) for the Sake of Brevity, is nothing but a *Sham*, a mere Pretence to be given out among the Vulgar, instead of that which is the *true* Reason at Bottom, but not fit to be given, namely, not letting the People see, how plainly the Worship of Images, so much practised, and encouraged in the Church of *Rome*, is forbidden in the Scriptures.

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self to consider the numberless Frauds and Impostures, Forgeries and Falsifications which so illustrious a Society of Christians makes no Difficulty to practise, for the aggrandizing themselves, supporting their Claims to temporal and spiritual Dominion, suppressing of Truth, and giving a Currency to their own Errors! I make no Doubt but in Countries of the Roman-catholic Persuasion, many a one, who might have otherwise lived and died zealous Christians, have been led into Scepticism, or perhaps into thorough Infidelity, by this Contemplation! in this, indeed,

But, in Reality, that which we call the second Commandment is a different one from the first. It was so esteemed by all the ancient Jews, and generally by the primitive Christians, of whom I think there are but one or two which the Papists themselves pretend to be of the contrary Opinion. But *Clement Alexandrinus*, one of them, most certainly, was not, as *Eftius* frankly acknowledges. And if *St. Augustin*, the other, does, in some Places, seem to make them one, in other Places, he plainly enough divides, and makes two of them. And they are plainly two, the first directing to the true Object of Worship, the second prescribing the Manner of it, the first commanding that we worship no other God but the God of *Israel*, the second forbidding to worship *him*, under any Image or Representation of him. These, sure, are quite different Things, and not one the Explanation of the other. And as they consolidate, against all Reason, the two first Commandments, so they divide the last, against all Reason too. The whole is only a Prohibition of Coveting the Possessions of our Neighbour, of what Kind soever they may be. The Coveting his Wife is certainly not a Commandment by itself. For though, in the fifth Chapter of *Deuteronomy* the Wife is placed at the Head of the other Things that are forbidden to be coveted, and so, may be cut off, and separated from them, yet in the twentieth Chapter of *Exodus*, she stands in the midst of them, after the House, and before the Man Servant, and cannot, without Violence, be taken from among them. *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, nor his Man-servant, &c.* After all, I am entirely in the Sentiments of those who think it a Matter of small Consequence how you count or divide the Commandments, provided none of them be omitted, or broken.

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they were wrong, and reasoned weakly. For they might have considered, that if one Party of Christians are so abandoned, as to make no Scruple to support or promote their Cause by Fraud and Forgery, there are others, who, as they stand in no Need, for the Maintenance of their Cause, of such Practices, so they abhor and detest, and are always ready to expose them. All they can justly infer from the Impostures and Forgeries of the Roman Church, is, (and they may very justly and reasonably infer so much) that, in all likelihood, she is very corrupt and erroneous, it being no way probable she would be at the Trouble, or run the Risque of exposing herself to the Infamy of corrupting, suborning, or suppressing Evidence, if she was not conscious her Cause was bad, and that Truth and Right were on the *Protestant* Side.

This iniquitous Practice of altering and corrupting the Works of the Antients, to make them speak what they would have them, and to keep them from speaking what they would not have them speak, was the thing that gave the first turn to the Mind of a Divinity Professor of *Louvain*, *Henry Boxhorn*, against the Church of *Rome*, and occasioned him to embrace the *Protestant* Religion. This Professor, it seems, had been employed about the *expurgatory Index*, published in the *Low-Countries*, by Commandment of the King of *Spain*, and the Duke of *Alva*, under the Care and Oversight of *Arias Montanus*, and (as he tells you himself) [*u*] struck out, or altered, with his

[*u*] De Eucharistica Harmonia Lib. 2.

own Hand, no fewer than six hundred Passages in antient Writings, which seemed to oppose the Doctrines and Claims of the Church of *Rome*. But upon due Reflection on what he had done, he became troubled in Mind, was tossed and hurried with many anxious Thoughts about the Foulness of the Practice he had suffered himself to be engaged in, and with Doubts and Suspicions that the *Romish* Doctrines were not true, nor their Claims and Pretensions well-founded, since they stood in need, for their Defence and Support, of such flagrant and shameful Impostures. Hereupon, he immediately entred into a free Enquiry and Examination of the Points in Controversy between us, was presently convinced of what he vehemently suspected, that true Christianity was to be found only among Protestants, went over to them, and continued with them, as long as he lived, to his great Satisfaction and Content.

SECT. VI.

Setting forth the Manner wherein the Church of Rome treats the holy Scriptures, and shewing it to be such as may reasonably cause a Suspicion that the Roman Catholic Religion is false, and justly prejudice any one against it.

THEIR ill Treatment of the Scripture in one Respect, namely, their altering particular Words and Phrases, or keeping particular Passages, such as the second Commandment, as much as may be, out of the Sight of the common People, was touched upon in the foregoing Section. And

in this, I shall point out some other Instances of their disrespectful Treatment of it. For they really maintain, and say, and do, concerning it, such Things, as seem too plainly to shew, they wish in their Hearts there was no such Book in the World, and would be glad, if they did but know how, to get rid of it.

They constantly and uniformly maintain, that the Authority of Scripture depends upon the Authority of the Church. And some of them have said, that, if it was not for her Authority, they should no more regard, nor give more Credit to the Gospel of St. *Matthew*, than to the Writings of *Livy*, or *Æsop's* Fables. That Saying (abating for the Levity and shocking Boldness of the Expression) might be, perhaps, endured, *in a Sense*, but is intolerable in the Sense wherein they use it. We might allow them to say, if that would satisfy, they should hardly receive either *that*, or any of the Gospels, as written by those whose Names they bear, and by divine Inspiration, if the Church (meaning the *apostolical* and *primitive* Church) had not by her *Authority* (meaning the Authority of her *Testimony*) warranted and proved them to be so. That is to say, if neither Fathers, nor Councils had any where quoted them as theirs, or spoken of them as read in their Assemblies, or made mention of them in any other Way, but been absolutely silent concerning them, they should have demurred about receiving them as canonical Scripture, and the Word of God. And in this Sense, I apprehend, we are to take that Saying of St. *Augustin*, so often quoted, and almost as often misquoted by

the Romanists, when they are speaking of this Subject, "*Ego non crederem, &c. I should not have believed the Gospel, if the Authority of the Church had not moved me thereto.*" But the Romanists are not content with this Meaning. They, by the Church, mean their own, as distinguished from all other Churches, and their own, too, as well in the present, and all future Ages, as in the most primitive Times; and by the Authority of this Church they mean, not its witnessing, or bearing its Testimony upon any Knowledge they have, or can pretend to have, above others, of the Truth and Certainty of the Thing, but only its Vote, the publick Decisions, and Determinations of it. And so, they say, in Effect, that, if the Church of Rome, or those at the Head of it, or representing it, shall now, or at any Time to come, take a Fancy to reprobate any one of the Gospels, or all four of them, or any other Part of the new Testament, or the whole of it, and solemnly define them to be Writings of no Authority, we are bound to believe them to be such. Take now a View of the dangerous Tendency of this Principle in a Case which had like to have happened in the thirteenth Century. About the middle, I think, of that Century, there appeared a Book with the Title of *Evangelium æternum, The eternal or everlasting Gospel*, supposed to be written by *Johannes de Parma*, General of the *Franciscan* Order, containing these, among other Blasphemies, — *That the Gospel of Christ is not the Gospel of the Kingdom, and brings no Man to Perfection, — That the New Testament was to be evacuated, and done away, as the Old had been*
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already, and that it was not to remain in Force above six Years longer,—And then, another, and a better, as far exceeding it as the Light of the Sun does that of the Moon, would take Place. This everlasting Gospel, and these Opinions, were warmly espoused by a prevailing Faction in the Church of Rome, namely, the *Franciscans*, and *Mendicants*. And had it not been for the stout Opposition that was made to them by the University of *Paris*, no body can tell but they might have taken Place, and the Gospel of *Christ*, or the New Testament turned out of Doors, by the Time they had set for it. For the *Fryers* had great Interest at *Rome*: The Popes were their fast Friends: (and no wonder; for Fryers are always *their* humble Servants) they favoured their Cause, and were very angry with the *University* for so warmly opposing it. Suppose now that *University* had been passive, and the *Fryers* had prevailed. Why, then, according to this Principle, the New Testament, and Christianity with it, must have been tamely suffered to be abolished, or a different Sort of Christianity brought in, in the room of it. Is this now a Principle fit to be endured amongst Christians?

Hitherto, however, the Church of *Rome* has forborn to reject, and does continue to receive and embrace the holy Scriptures. She does so. But in what Character does she receive and embrace them? Why, as a Rule of Faith and Manners. What, as a perfect and complete Rule of Faith and Manners? Nothing like it. 'Tis a Rule, so far as it goes; but it goes but a little Way, and *Tradition* must come in, to help it out, and to sup-

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ply all the pretended Deficiencies of it. The *Trent*
Creed requires the Profession, of *firmly believing*
and embracing apostolical and ecclesiastical Traditions;
and it had been before declared by the Council,
in what Manner they were to be received and em-
braced, namely, *with a pious Affection, Reverence,*
and Veneration, equal to that with which we receive
the Books of the Old and New Testament. It was not,
it seems, enough, to say, as Cardinal *Pallavicini*,
I think, tells us, one of the Bishops in the Coun-
cil would have had it gone, that it was to be re-
ceived with a *like* Reverence and Veneration. That
Word was not strong enough to give their Mean-
ing, which was, that it should be received with a
Veneration not only *like in Kind*, but *equal in De-*
gree, to that with which they were to receive the
holy Scriptures. If we are to receive the Bible
with no greater Veneration than is due to *Tradi-*
tion, you will be, I believe, of Opinion, when you
come to consider what it is they call *Tradition*, and
what Sort of Things they are that are left to be
conveyed by it, that 'tis but little that is to be
shewn it. Whatever our Saviour, or his Apostles
delivered, *for Doctrines*, by Word of Mouth, or
whatever Practices they observed, *as necessary and*
perpetual, we willingly receive, provided we are
sure they did deliver such Doctrines, and observe
such Practices. And the *unanimous* Testimony of
those who conversed with them, and of their im-
mediate Successors, conveyed down to us in their
Writings, that they did teach such Doctrines, and
observe such Practices, we look upon as a pretty
good Proof that they did. Especially, if we
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find great Appearances, and probable Proofs of such Things in the holy Scriptures. Therefore we receive the Canon of Scripture, and the divine Inspiration of it, the episcopal Government of the Church, and some few Things besides, if not chiefly, yet, in a good Measure, upon account of the Tradition of the Church, which, in regard to those Things, has been universal, uniform, uninterrupted, and received, according to the Rule of *Vincentius Lerinensis*, every where, always, and by all. But the ecclesiastical Traditions of the Romanists are quite different Things. They are Doctrines and Practices, which they are pleased to say, but do not attempt, and have no possible Way, to prove, were delivered by our Saviour and his Apostles, without being committed to Writing, either by those to whom they were pretended to be delivered, or by any to whom these successively delivered them; but were trusted to Memory, and handed down from one to another by Word of Mouth, for seventeen or eighteen hundred Years, from the beginning to our Times. There is no need, I should think, to set myself either to argue against, or to ridicule (which indeed is the proper Way of treating) this Sort of Conveyance for ecclesiastical Ordinances and divine Truths. We find by our daily Experience, that Oral Tradition is too uncertain and insecure a Conveyance for the most common Story, or the plainest and simplest Matter of Fact, to be trusted to. And how then can any one think it a fit Conveyance for Christian Doctrines and Institutions, which (to be preserved, and kept pure) do often require to be set down in Writing,

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with Precision, and the utmost Exactness of Expression?

Neither are Papists content with representing the Scripture as an imperfect Rule, by reason of its speaking nothing, or not home enough to many Points of *their* Faith and Practice, but they constantly set it forth as a Rule, by Reason of its pretended Obscurity, of little or no Use, even in respect of such Points as it does extend to, and speak much of. They would make you believe, there is no knowing what it teaches in almost any thing; but long Experience shews us the contrary, they having been made very clear and intelligible, in most Places, and in all Places which contain necessary Things, by learned Expositors, and some of these of their own Communion. And if they have been sometimes made use of to patronize false and wild Opinions, or Opinions that are flatly contradictory to each other, this should not be charged to the Obscurity of it, being plainly owing to nothing else but the Lusts, or Interests, or the perverse Prejudices of Men, who having once taken up an Opinion, and growing in love with it, or finding it suited to their corrupt Inclinations, or useful to some of their worldly Purposes, will wrest and torture the holy Scriptures (as they do also the Councils and Fathers, and as Princes, falling out, do their Treaties, or Lawyers do Acts of Parliament) to support it, or to give some plausible Colour to it. And of all Men, I think, the *Papists* have given us the most notorious Instances of this, one particularly (to name now no other) in the pitiful Shifts and Evasions they make use of,
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to reconcile Prayer in an unknown Tongue with St. Paul's fourteenth Chapter of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, which gives us the plainest Condemnation of it, and clearest Arguing against it. It is upon account of this pretended Obscurity of Scripture that they call it—*mere Ink and Paper—a dead Character—unsensed Letters—a leaden Rule—a Nose of Wax.*—Which may be set this Way or that, just as you please; and bestow upon it such opprobrious Names, as are no Way fit for Christians to use, and quite inconsistent with that Reverence which they, now and then, upon a special Occasion, think proper, in a cold manner, for Decency and good Manners Sake, to express towards it. This rude and affronting Manner of treating the Scriptures, while they would seem to have some Regard and Respect for them, is like the Worship of *Hercules*, by throwing Stones at him; and, I think, I have somewhere met with it, under that Comparison.

A further Instance of their disrespectful and injurious Treatment of the Scriptures is locking them up from the common People in the learned Languages. For so they do in some Countries of the *Roman Catholic* Communion, particularly in *Spain*, where the Translation of the Bible, or any Part of it, into the vulgar Tongue, or keeping it in one's Hands, already translated, is forbidden under the heaviest Penalties. Indeed, in some Places, as in *France*, a Liberty to translate it into the Language of the Country has been obtained, or taken. But what Benefit have the People received thereby? Certainly not much; none of the

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Laity being allowed the Use of their Translations, without a License from the Bishop, or, at least, from the Confessor or Parish Priest, which few will sue for, and of those who do, most, it is likely, will be suspected, merely for that Reason, of being heretically inclined, and so, will be denied it. For the Rule is, to let none have it but *such as they shall understand can receive no Hurt by it*; and who can those be, but such as they know to be so bigotted, that they will rather believe the Church, than the Scriptures, or, which comes to the same Thing, will interpret the Scriptures according to the Sense and Doctrine of the Church, though it be ever so manifestly repugnant to them. Here in *England*, the *Roman Catholics*, I suppose, are somewhat more indulged, (either because they cannot help it, or for prudential Reasons) and *English* Bibles, or New Testaments at least, are more commonly to be seen in their Houses. But what Sort of New Testaments? Why, the New Testament translated into *English* by some *English* fugitive Divines, then residing in the College at *Rheims*, together with *Marginal*, and other large *Annotations* by *Thomas Worthington*. And what it was that moved them to attempt this Translation, they tell you plainly enough, in the Preface. It was not to satisfy their Obligations to the christian Laity, by giving them the Scriptures in their Mother Tongue, that *they might read, learn, mark, and inwardly digest them*, to their Comfort and Edification, which they stick not to declare would have been *neither a necessary, nor a wise and profitable Design*, nor, perchance, in a quiet and peaceful State

State of the Church, to be endured; but to accommodate themselves to the present Time, and the unhappy Condition of their Country. In plainer Terms, it was to furnish the *English Roman Catholics* with a right good Popish Translation of the Scriptures, that so, they might be taken off from looking, as perhaps they might be solicited, and would be too apt to do, into those Versions of it, which had been made, with greater Sincerity, by *Protestants*. And a right good Popish Translation it is, there being, in some Places of the very Text, the rankest Popery, where the Original is quite indifferent, and has nothing in it that can serve the Purposes of their Church, or any Party of *Christians*, one or other; one Instance of which I give you in [x] the Margin. Neither is this enough: The People, it seems, were not to

[x] The Place is *Heb. xi. 21.* where it is said of *Jacob* προσκύνῃσιν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ, that he worshiped upon the top of his Staff, or, as our Translators have it, leaning upon the top of his Staff, honestly putting the Word *leaning* in a different Character, to intimate to the Reader that there was nothing in the Original to answer to it, but that it was inserted to make the true and undoubted Sense of the Place plain and clear to him. For it undoubtedly means, that the Patriarch by Reason of his Weakness, was forced to lean upon his Staff, to support himself, when he bowed down his Head, and worshiped God. But how do the Gentlemen of *Rheims* render it? Why, following the vulgar *Latin*, and winking at the Word *ἐπὶ* signifying upon, they translate, *He adored the toppe of his rodde.* And if he worshiped the top of the Rod, or the Head of the Staff, which he walked and supported himself with, and perhaps was no more than a Stick of Wood without Head, or Face, or the Likeness of any thing, upon it, how can it be thought a Sin in *Catholics* to worship Crucifixes, Images, and Pictures, curiously carved and painted, the real Figures and Representations of holy Men and Women departed this Life. Some of the Popish *French* Translators have followed the Vulgar and the *Rhemists*, and translated the Place as they do; and, in Truth, have
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be trusted with reading the Scriptures, even thus misfranslated and disguised, without Spectacles of *their* making; I mean the Notes standing in the Margin, and at the Foot of each Chapter, for *deciding*, as they pretend, *the Doubts, and clearing the Controversies of those Days*, but, in Reality, for throwing a Mist before the Eyes of the Reader (which they do by false Reasonings, false Quotations, and Quotations from counterfeited and supposititious Writings, such as those attributed to *Dionysius the Areopagite*) that he may not be able to discern, how contrary the Doctrines, and Ways of their Church, are to the Doctrines delivered, and to the Ways delineated in the holy Scriptures. Such is the Conduct, such the Fidelity and Sincerity, of that Translation, which I thought it would be proper to take Notice of, that Protestants, if ever they light upon it, or it be thrown in their Way,

taken greater Liberties in misfranslating and corrupting the Text, to serve the Cause of Popery, than the *Rhemists* have done. Though the *Rhemists*, it must be said, have abundantly made up what they fall short of the other in misfranslating, by the Sophistry and Prevarication they every where shew in their Annotations. In one of the *French* Translations printed in 1701 with Approbation, they translate *Acts* xiii. 2. λειτουργούντων δὲ αὐτῶν τῷ Κυρίῳ (which literally is no more than, *as they ministered to the Lord*) in these Words, *when they had offered to the Lord the Sacrifice of the Mass*. And though the *Rhemists* (conscientious Men, and keeping, as they profess, *their Text most religiously!*) have not rendered it so, yet they take care to tell you, in their Note upon the Place, that, "*they might have translated, for Ministering, Sacrificing, yea, saying Mass; for so (if you believe them) the Apostles did.*" The same Translation, though it renders, as we do, *1 Cor.* iii. 15. *yet so as by Fire*, puts *Purgatory* in the Margin. But another of their Translations, made for the Use of the new Converts, is bolder, and makes no Scruple to put *Purgatory* into the very Text. This is enough to give the Reader a Taste of the Sincerity of the *Rhemists*, and other *Popish* Translators of the Scriptures.

as 'tis very likely it sometimes will, in popish Families where they converse much, may be aware of the Snare that is laid for them, and know how to avoid it, and that the Papists themselves may see how egregiously they are imposed upon, and illuded, under Pretence of Institution and Instruction.

And now, upon a Review of what has been said, you will see how *Systematically* they proceed, in lessening the Credit of the holy Scripture. It has no Authority, belike, and is no Rule of Faith, unless the Church (meaning the *Roman Church*) shall deign to receive it, as such.—When it is received and recognized as a Rule of Faith, it is still but a partial and defective one, and *Tradition*, even *Oral* and *Unwritten*, is brought in, to supply its Deficiencies, and preferred to it.—And where it may be admitted for a Rule, it is so dark and obscure, that there is no understanding it, or else, couched in such vague, ambiguous, and oracular Terms, that one can hardly avoid being bewildered, and misled by it.—That it is right, therefore, to keep so dangerous, so mischievous a Book, out of the Hands of the common People,—And if ever it be suffered, upon special Consideration of Time and Place, to go among them, it should be no otherwise, than as Madmen are sometimes allowed to do, with a staunch Popish Expounder or Representer, as a Guard, to keep it from doing Mischief to all that come near it. This is their Way of treating the Word of God. Now let us consider if this Treatment of it does not afford a reasonable Ground of Suspicion, or rather a fair Presumption,

Presumption, not only that their Way of Religion is false, but that the leading and governing Part of the Church do, in their Consciences, know, or believe, it to be so.

Indeed, they would have you think that their *putting the Light* of God's Word thus *under a Bushel*, and not suffering the People to have the Sight of it, is not done, because, being conscious of the Corruptions of the Church, they are afraid the People, by the Help of that Light, should come to see them. No, they tell you, they have no Apprehensions of that Kind, as you may plainly see by their allowing the Learned the Use of it; the Learned! who, surely, are more capable and likely, than the Vulgar, by the Study of it, to discover the Corruptions of the Church, if there were any. This looks like saying something; but if you examine it, 'tis just nothing. For, what Thanks, pray, are due to the Church, for letting the Learned have the Use of the Scripture? How can she help it? The Learned can read it in the original Language, and want not the Church to translate it for them. And if it is to be kept from the Unlearned, who, for God's Sake, but the Learned should have the keeping of it? It must be left in the Custody of some, to keep it from the rest; and there is no Help for it, that I know of, unless it were practicable to call in all the Copies, and make a Bonfire of them. In a Word, they must be deposited in the Hands of the Learned, how far soever the Consequences may reach, whatever Loss their Church shall sustain; and it is not a little she has sustained by it. About
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the Time of the Revival of Letters, vast Numbers of the Learned, by studying the Scriptures more carefully, and making freer Inquiries into Things, than they had been before used to do, soon discovered the Errors and Corruptions of the *Roman Catholic* Religion, and flew off from it. And from that Time to this, one or other of them, upon a clear Sight, and full Conviction of its Corruptions, which they have gained by a free and impartial Perusal of the Scriptures, have been almost daily leaving it. And there is Reason to believe, that many, who yet continue in it, see its Corruptions; some, one; some, another; some, more; and some, it may be, all, or most of them. But they still remain in the external Communion of the Church, in Pursuance of their worldly Attachments or Expectations, or for Want of Courage to break off from it, and to expose themselves to all the Persecutions they must expect upon that Account, or from an Ill-Grounded Prejudice which is carefully instilled into all *Roman Catholics*, that the Church is not to be forsaken, *upon any Account whatever*. 'Tis therefore much safer (was it a Matter of Choice) to trust the Scriptures in the Hands of the Learned than of the Unlearned, of the Clergy than of the Laity, because those have much stronger Attachments to the Church, and are by far more unlikely, upon a Discovery of her Corruptions, to desert from her. The Church of *Rome* knows this; and therefore sets the former to keep them from the latter. Neither is this our Construction, but their own Confession, of which many Examples might be produced, but, for Brevity's

vity's Sake, I will content myself with one. And that is, the Advice which was given, by certain Bishops assembled at *Bononia*, to Pope *Julius III.* concerning the true Way to support, and establish the *Roman Church*; wherein, among other things, they recommend it to him, to exert all his Power to hinder the Bible, as much as may be, from being promiscuously read, afterwards adding, "*This is the Book, that, beyond all others, has raised those Storms and Whirlwinds, which we are all most carried away with. And, in Truth, whoever shall carefully consider it, and then take a View of all the Things that are usually done in our Churches, will find a great Difference between them, and that our Doctrine is, in divers Particulars, not only unlike, but even contrary to that which is held forth in it. And no sooner do Men understand this, but being spirited up by one or other of our learned Adversaries, they never cease publishing the latter, nor leave bawling and clamouring against us, till they have made us odious to all Men.*" Such are the Policies of the *Roman Church*. She is very sensible that the Bible is utterly irreconcilable with many of her Ways; and therefore she disparages, and, as much as may be, suppresses it. She considers it as her Enemy; and so, according to one of the impious Maxims of some of her Casuists, *it is but a venial Sin to bespatter, and load it with false Imputations, in order to lessen that Authority which is so hurtful to her.*

SECT. VII.

That the implicit Faith required in the Church of Rome is a strong Presumption that her Faith and Religion are erroneous.

IMplicit Faith, taken in the Sense wherein the Guides of the Church of *Rome* require it, is, your believing whatever she teaches, altho' you don't know what she teaches, or, if you do know what is it, your assenting to it, without having in your Mind any Proof or Reason to determine your Judgment, and to induce your Assent, besides the Authority and Determination of the Church. I don't pretend to say, this, in all Cases, is an irrational Thing: For there are some Cases, wherein it is the most reasonable Thing a Person can do; nay, wherein it is absolutely necessary. Children must believe *implicitly*; and of those who are grown up, the Understandings of some are so low, and their Capacities so small, that they can scarcely receive the great Principles and Doctrines of Religion, or learn what they are, but, to be sure, are quite unable to make any solid and reasonable Judgment concerning the Truth or Falschhood of them: And some, of better Understandings, are too lazy and indolent to give themselves any Thought about such Things, and so, upon the Matter, are almost as ignorant as the other. What are these Men now to do? Must they live and die without believing, or thinking, one way or other, concerning religious Things? Must they have no Persuasion, no Belief, about them? That would be

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leaving them without any Principles to govern their Lives by. But, if it be fit and necessary they should believe the great Principles of Religion and Articles of Faith, upon some Grounds or other, they must believe them, for what I can see, *till they are willing to inform their Minds, and able to judge for themselves*, upon the Authority of their Guides, and hear the Voice of the Church wherein they live. And I have no Doubt but the Faith of an ignorant and incapable Person, grounded only upon the Authority of his Guides, if right in itself, and strong enough to be a governing Principle to his Life, will be acceptable to God.

Thus far, then, we of the *Protestant* Religion, and Church of *England*, believe we may safely, and and think it reasonable to go; but further we dare not venture. We hold it the Duty of every Christian to examine Things with all the Faculties he has; and to understand his Religion, as far as they will carry him, that what he, at first, believed *implicitly*, upon the Credit and Authority of his Teachers, he may come, at length, to believe upon reasonable and sufficient Grounds. But those of the Church of *Rome* are in other Sentiments. They inculcate upon all Sorts of People a *blind* Faith, not only in the Church, but in their own Bishops, if not also in their Confessors, and Parish Priests; maintaining that such a Faith is not only *safe*, but *meritorious*, more excellent in itself, and pleasing to God, than that which is the Result of a rational Inquiry, and grounded upon the clearest Proof and Evidence of the Thing, and that its Merit is not lost, tho' a Man were to be led into *Heresy* by it.

They

They tell the People they *need* not, and indeed *ought* not, to *prove* any thing, but to *hold fast* every thing, the Church teaches, without proving it ; that it is not their Business to examine her Doctrines, whether they be true or false, because that would seem to imply some Doubt concerning the Truth of them, which would be a mortal Sin ; but only to examine whether they are, or not, her Doctrines. And, finding them to be such, they are, without more ado, or any further Inquiry, cordially to embrace them, and to *hold fast the Profession* of them, *without Wavering* ; assuring themselves, that She, who has defined them, is *faithful*, nay, *infallible*, and cannot possibly lead her Children into any Error ; — that the Precepts of *proving all Things*, of *trying the Spirits whether they be of God*, and some other of the same Sense and Import, were not given to the Vulgar, but to *Universities*, or *learned Men*, only ; — that, tho' dubious Doctrines may be examined, the Doctrines of Councils must not be examined, because they are not dubious, but evidently right, and good, and true ; for, if they were not such, they would not have been defined. Nay, many of them tell you, that the Pope singly, whenever he is *in Cathedrâ*, cannot declare and define any thing but what is good and true, and that we ought to conclude, and firmly believe, it to be so, let it be what it will, if he has defined it ; and that, *if he were to command Vices, and forbid Virtues, the Church were bound to believe Vices to be good, and Virtues to be evil*. This, I assure you, is no Exaggeration, or Misrepresentation of *Romish* Principles : For you have most of it, in express Words, or,

however, in Substance, in the *Disputations* of Cardinal *Bellarmino* [g], and the rest, in the Writings of others, who were of the same Rank, and as eminent Churchmen, as he; nor will you fail to hear it in all free Conversations with *Roman Catholics*. When they are pressed with any knotty Difficulty, they presently cut through it with this Answer—*The Church is infallible: The Church teaches so or so; and so I believe; and there's an End of the Matter* [h].

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[g] De Verbi Dei Interpret. L. iii. c. 10. De Rom. Pont. L. iv. c. 5.

[h] It signifies nothing to tell us, as the Author of *the Essay for Catholick Communion* does, ch. xii. that *implicit Faith* is not found in any publick Profession, or in any Council of the Roman Church. For, if it is not expressly, it is, however, virtually, defined in the Article of *Infallibility*. For *Infallibility* in the Church, and *implicit Faith* in the Members of it, are as much Relatives, as *absolute Power* in the Prince, and *unlimited Subjection* in the Subject; and a Decree of the former plainly involves in it a Decree and Definition of the latter. But, tho' the *Essayer* is willing to save *his* Church (for a *Papist* he manifestly is, tho' he affects to write in the Character of a *Protestant*,—a strange sort of *Protestant*! such as I never, in my Life, either met with, or heard of) tho' he is willing to spare *his* Church the *Odium* and Infamy of establishing a blind and implicit Faith by any publick Profession or Declaration, yet I observe he would fain fix it upon another Church (which he has no Concern with, or Relation to) I mean the primitive Church, and the Apostles Creed. “For (says he) that Article of our Christian Faith, “*I believe in the holy Catholick Church*, shews, that we should “be always in Readiness to submit ourselves to the Catholick “(by which he every where means the *Roman*) Church.” But in vain; for I don't know there is any such Article in the Creed. It does indeed say, *I believe the holy Catholick Church*. But the Word

One would now think it an impossible Thing for a Man, who is not quite stupid, not to fall into some Suspicion, that Things, in that Church, must be very much amiss, when so much Care is taken that the People may not look into them; when not only the Word of God, which was given them to be a *Lantern* to their Feet, and a *Light* unto their Paths, is withheld from them, but all other Books, which would enable them to judge on which Side the Truth lies, and might undeceive them, are kept out of their Hands, and they are forbid to read them, at the Peril of their Souls; nay, are not allow'd to harbour any Doubts, or to pursue any Reflections of their own Minds, tho' they should intrude and force themselves upon them, for their Satisfaction. Those who are *true*, and teach the *Way of God in Truth*, and believe themselves to do so, will always be desirous to have their Doctrines sifted and examined to the uttermost, assuring themselves, that, the more narrowly they are examined, the more manifestly true they will appear. But to decline Examination is an inseparable Mark of Imposture. There never was an Impostor in the World who would submit the Things he proposes, and would have to be received, to Examination, if he could

Word *in* is this Author's own, which he has slyly convey'd into it, as I have observed the Writers of that Communion are much given to do, when they have Occasion to recite it. And this, doubtless, is done with Design to make it believed, that an *implicit* Faith in the Church is taught us in the very *Apostles* and the *Nicene* Creeds, and that, as we are to believe *in* God, the Father Almighty, and *in* Jesus Christ, and *in* the Holy Ghost, so we are to believe *in* the Church, and place our Faith *in* the one, as we do *in* the other.

help it ; but all of them, under one Pretence or other, are for keeping them, or the Means of discovering the Falsity of them, out of Sight. So did *Mahomet*, the grand *Impostor*, forbidding his Followers ever to enter into any Disputes about his Religion, lest the Absurdities of it should be detected. And what thinking Man can think any other, than that, as the *Roman Church* follows herein his Example, takes the same Measures, and, indeed, stronger than he had done, to keep the People in Ignorance, to lead them on blindfold, and to oblige them to take their Religion upon Trust, she must do it under the same Fears and Apprehensions ? These, I acknowledge, are my Thoughts ; but they are also the Thoughts of a much greater than I, whose Words I shall transcribe, and with them put an end to this Section : “ I have often wonder’d (says “ *Archbishop Tillotson* [i]) why the People in the “ *Church of Rome* do not suspect their Teachers “ and Guides to have some ill Design upon them, “ when they do so industriously debar them of the “ Means of Knowledge, and are so very loth to “ let them understand what it is that we have to “ say against their Religion. For, can any thing “ in the World be more suspicious, than to persuade Men to put out their Eyes, upon Promise “ that they will help them to a much better and “ more faithful Guide ? If any Church, any Profession “ of Men, be unwilling their Doctrines should be exposed to Trial, it is a certain Sign that they know “ something by them that is faulty, and will not endure the Light. This is the Account which our Sa-

[i] See Sermon 21, towards the End.

“viour gives us in a like Case: It was because
“Men’s Deeds were evil, that they loved Darknes,
“rather than Light: For every one that doth Evil
“hateth the Light; neither cometh he to the Light,
“lest his Deeds should be reprov’d; but he that doth
“the Truth cometh to the Light, that his Deeds may
“be made manifest that they are wrought in God.”

C H A P. IV.

*Shewing the Danger and Unlawfulness of Com-
munion with the Church of Rome.*

S E C T. I.

*Wherein is made to appear the Danger of Communion
with that Church, by reason of divers Doctrines
and Practices, maintain’d in it, that are, in their
natural Consequences and Effects, destructive of all
Holiness and Godliness of Living.*

Hitherto we have been wholly taken up with re-
moving those Prejudices which may seem
contrary to the *Protestant* Religion, and Church of
England, or those which may seem favourable to
the Church of *Rome*, and with suggesting such
Considerations as we think are just and legitimate Pre-
judices against that Church, such as must needs
raise, in our Opinion, in all thinking Men, a
Suspicion, or rather afford them a reasonable *Pre-
sumption*, of its being very erroneous and corrupt.
But now, we shall draw nearer to the Point we are
driving at, which is convincing their Judgments that
it is really corrupt and erroneous, and so corrupt

and erroneous, that Communion with it is not only *dangerous*, but *absolutely sinful* and unlawful.

I would have no one think that what I shall here offer is half, or hardly the twentieth Part, of what might be said concerning the Hazards of being saved, which must be run in the Communion of that Church; intending to be as brief as the Plan I have laid down to my self will permit, and to say no more than what I judge will be barely sufficient. I shall therefore ground all I have to say concerning the Hazard of Salvation in that Church, upon two Things only; the *first* of which is, the natural Tendency of its Doctrines and Practices to undermine and subvert all Holiness and Godliness of Life; the *second*, the scandalous Maxims in Morality which are commonly and currently taught in it. Nor shall I count up *all* these, which would be too troublesome, but only take Notice of some few, proposing *them* as a Sample, from whence we may judge of the rest.

Now, we know it was one great End and Design of *Christianity*, to teach Men, that, denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World, as a necessary and indispensable Condition of their being happy in the World to come. From whence these two Things will unavoidably and evidently follow, — That whatever Doctrines shall be found to have a *natural* Tendency to undermine and frustrate this Design, cannot be Christian Doctrines, — and that whatever Church teaches, and maintains, and imposes upon the People such Doctrines, with Practices consonant thereto, cannot be adhered to, and communicated withal,

withal, without endangering our Salvation. Now the Church of *Rome* teaches and imposes many such.

The Doctrine of that Church, concerning *Works of Supererogation*, and the Communication of the Merits thereof, which the Church, it seems, has the Possession and Disposition of, *naturally* tends, not only to damp and slacken the Endeavours of Men after all Christian Excellencies and Perfections, which we *Protestants* hold ourselves obliged to aim at, and to be continually aspiring after, but also to make them careless about such Things, as, by their own Confession, are Matters of strict Duty and Obligation, and to live securely, in the constant Neglect and Omission of them. Consider, if this be not the *natural Tendency* of the Doctrine, when you come to see what it is. The Doctrine is plainly this,—That the Sufferings of Saints are often greater than their own Sins require, and that they often do certain good Works that are not strictly necessary, but are over and above God's Commandments, which they are only *counselled, advised, or exhorted*, but not *required* and *injoined* to do, and may therefore do, or let alone, just as they shall chuse. But, if they do chuse to do them, as many excellent Men and Women, both dead and living, have chosen to do, the Merit of them is applied, not wholly, if at all, to the Increase of their own Happiness in Heaven, as we hold it to be, but to procure Heaven and Happiness for others, who have been negligent of their Duty, or perhaps have lived and died impenitently in many great Sins. And this Treasure or Fund of Merit is in the Keeping of the Pope, and may be dispensed by him to such Persons, and in such Proportions, as he shall think fit. This now is the Doctrine; and
who

who does not see, that, if it were true, and believed to be so, there would be little Encouragement to aim at Perfection, and that very few would do it ? There are but few of those *pious* Souls, who will do more than they apprehend God commands and requires of them ; and fewer still of those *charitable* ones, who will do this, not for the Increase of their own Happiness, but purely for the Benefit of others, that such, as have no Goodness of their own, may be supplied from the *Overplus* and Superabundance of theirs : Especially too, when they consider, that there is no Occasion for putting themselves to so much Trouble and Suffering ; no more Occasion for it, than there is for carrying a Drop of Water to the Sea, with Intent to swell it, and make the Passage of Ships, to and fro, more safe and easy. For this spiritual Fund is supposed already to be full, *as the Waters cover the Sea*, and never to be exhausted. And, indeed, if it were otherwise, the Popes, sure, would not have been so lavish of it, as, only for wearing St. *Francis's* Cord, and some other Considerations no less trifling, to grant a full Remission of all Sins at the Hour of Death, as divers of them have done. As to those who are yet in their Sins, and like to continue so, they will not doubt, but they are, notwithstanding, very safe, if they can but keep well with the Church, till, either for Love or Money, or some trifling Service perform'd towards it, they can obtain an *Indulgence*, whereby their Sins shall be forgiven, and the Righteousness of others placed to their Account. This is natural to be, and has been notoriously, the Effect of these Doctrines and Practices in the Church of *Rome* ;
and

and can only be prevented by telling Men, as we do, what is most true, that, tho' lower Excellencies and more imperfect Attainments will, for Christ's Sake, be accepted, yet the highest are commanded, and, in proportion to our Abilities, to be aspired after; that, *when they have done all they can do, they have done no more than is their Duty, and are unprofitable Servants*; that they are to *work out*, each one for himself, *with Fear and Trembling*, his own Salvation, and go to Heaven through his own Righteousness and Obedience, not that of another.

The Doctrine or Sacrament of *Penance*, as it is taught and practised in the *Roman Church*, far from any Furtherance, must needs be a very great Hindrance to Newness and Holiness of Life. The Parts of it, according to the Doctrine of that Church, are *Attrition* or *Contrition*, *Confession*, and *Satisfaction*. And such Corruptions have been introduced into each of them, as, instead of *plucking up Sin by the Roots*, which is the vain Boast of the *Roman Catechism*, naturally tend to give it a greater Fastening in the Soul, and to promote the Growth of it.

I mention *Attrition* and *Contrition* both, because I find it is a Point which the *Roman Divines* are not quite agreed in, whether *Attrition*, with *Confession*, be not sufficient, or *Contrition* be not also necessary. *Contrition* is a hearty and deep Sorrow, which the Sinner conceives, for his having offended a good God, entitled to, as well as worthy of, his highest Love, and most hearty Obedience. But *Attrition*, you must know, according to the Sense of the *Roman Church*, and her Divines, is nothing more than a Concern and Grief for his having, by his Sin,
exposed

exposed himself to the Wrath of God, and the Damnation of Hell, without the least *Charity*, as they call it, or *Love of God*, going along with it. The former was esteem'd in the Church of *Rome* itself, as well as every where else, till the Council of *Trent*, an essential Part of Repentance; and, since that Council, some few of her Divines and Casuists seem to hold the same Opinion. But even *these*, according to the Doctrine of that Council, will not allow that the Sinner is reconciled to God, and reinstated in his Favour, merely by his *Contrition*, be it ever so great; but that is to be attributed to his actual *Confession*, and *Absolution* received thereupon, or, at least, an earnest Desire of it, without which, how penitent soever, he still remains in his Sins, and under the Wrath of God. Is not this, now, strange Doctrine, that a Sinner, let him be ever so penitent, will be damned, if he neglects to *confess*, or cannot get *Absolution* from a Priest, or is so unhappy as to think (as many wise Men do) it will be of no Use and Avail to him, and therefore does not seek it?

But, as I intimated before, the Stream of the *Romish* Doctors runs the other Way. They will not come up even to *this*, but think it is laying too great a Burden upon Sinners, and contrary to the Peace and Quiet of their Consciences. Therefore, to give them Ease, and deliver them from the grievous Yoke of *Contrition*, and *the Love of God*, they maintain, and teach the People, whose Consciences they have the Direction of, that *Contrition*, or a Grief for having offended God, is not necessary; but that *Attrition*, or a Dislike of their Sin, for having made themselves, by it, liable to Damnation, join'd with

Confession

Confession and *Absolution*, is sufficient to restore a Man, tho' he have sinned ever so grievously, to a State of Grace and Acceptance. So true and just is that Reflection of Archbishop *Tillotson*, [k] " That
" the Council of *Trent* have so framed their Doctrine
" in the Point of Repentance, that any one may
" see, they did not matter how much they abated
" on the Part of the Penitent, provided the Power
" of the Priest be but advanced and kept up in its
" full Height."

The next Part of the Sacrament of *Penance* (as they call it) is *Confession* of Sin to a Priest. And this, together with *Absolution*, which follows after, is no less *pernicious to Piety* than the former. *Confession*, the most innocent of the two, does, nevertheless, as Things are there order'd, a great deal more Mischiefs, than it does Good. For it is not here as it was in the primitive Church, where Confessions were publick for all publick and open Sins ; and, if private Confessions were allow'd, and sometimes practis'd, they were then made to a *publick Officer*, some *Presbyter* of great Piety, Gravity, and Wisdom, whom the Church had appointed, as a fit Person, to receive them, and to assist the Penitents in the Conduct and Management of their Repentance. But, in the Church of *Rome*, every one chuses his own *Confessor*, and 'tis enough, if he does but confess to a *real*, tho' the most *wicked* Priest, (one, perhaps, who was his Confident or Companion in Wickedness) or to a vagrant one, whom he never saw before, and is not likely ever to see again, so long as he lives.

[k] Serm. vol. viii. p. 125.

What Good can there come of such Confession? But, if you consider, what the Confession, I mean, the Subject-Matter of it, is to be, you will easily perceive it must be, in many Cases, an Occasion of a great deal of Mischief: I mean not so much the Inconveniencies and Dangers to particular Persons, to Families, or to the Publick, which the depositing of so many interesting and important Secrets in the Breast of the Priesthood may be attended with, as the ill Influence it is apt to have upon the Morals of those who are concern'd; I mean, both *Confessor* and *Penitent*. The *Penitent*, it seems, by the Law of the Church, must not only reveal the particular Sin he has been guilty of, but Time, and Place, and Persons concern'd, and, in short, every Circumstance, concerning the Commission of it, that can alter the Nature or *Species* of the Sin, or either increase, or lessen, the Guilt of it. And as he, or she, are not supposed so capable, as the *Confessor*, of judging what Circumstances will make these Alterations, 'tis necessary that all, and every thing that has any Relation to the Sin, or Connection with it, should be discover'd, and laid plainly before him. And not only actual Transgressions, with all their Circumstances, must be told, but all the wicked Purposes, Wishes, and Desires, Covetings and Lustings of the Heart must be laid open to him. Do but, now, figure, in your Imagination, a *Confessor*, and his *Penitent*; the Confessor, it may be, a Youth, or in the Prime of Life; the *Penitent*, a Female, and, perhaps, fair; *her*, kneeling before him, and confessing; *him*, all the while asking Questions, in order to get to the Bottom of this bad Affair; and not only so, but

but rumaging also her very Heart for all the criminal Motions and Desires which have at any time risen in it. It must be, doubtless, to one of a vain and light Temper, no small Happiness to be daily entertain'd with the secret History of a thousand different *Galanteries*, as well in high, as in low Life, known to no body besides. But to a Person of a corrupt Mind, or not well established and confirm'd in the Habits of Virtue, 'tis a dangerous Snare and Temptation. Such *Communications*, whisper'd in the Ear, and in a Corner, as must needs often pass between the *Penitent*, and her *Penitentiary* (unless he forget his Duty, and flubber his Work over, without searching into Matters, as the Church *expects* and *orders* him to do) are very infectious, and will be apt to *corrupt* his *good Manners*: And by knowing the Constitutions and Inclinations of all Persons he is concern'd with, and where an Attack upon the Virtue of any one may be made without much Fear of Repulse and Shame, and where it cannot be made with Safety, he will have an Advantage, and, consequently, an Encouragement to attempt any Wickedness of this Sort, which those, who suppose all to be virtuous till they are known to be otherwise, will be without. There is Room enough here to expatiate upon all the Dangers to which both *Penitent* and *Confessor* are exposed, by these clancular Confessions. But, for the rest, I chuse to leave the Reader to his own Reflections, and to the many Stories which are credibly reported by grave Writers, concerning the Wickedness which these secret Transactions have been the Causes, or the Occasions of; and only say, upon the whole, that, if the Necessity of confessing

feſſing to a Prieſt ſhall be a Reſtraint upon ſome few Perſons, who dare not prevaricate, and hide their Sins from him, and ſhall keep *theſe* from ſome Com-miſſions, it will doubtleſs invite and lead *others* into greater, and cauſe in the World more deplorable Scandals, than it prevents.

But what deeper Stab can be given to Religion and Piety, than is given by the Doctrin and Prac-tice of *Prieſtly Abſolution*, which comes after Con-ſeſſion, and is call'd the *Form* of this pretended Sa-crament of *Penance*? It is the Doctrin of the *Ro-man* Church that *Abſolution* is a *judicial* Act, whereby all the Sins of the Party receiving it are forgiven him, and the Sinner is reſtored to the Favour of God. This is comfortable Divinity to thoſe who are reſolved to continue in their Sins. For 'tis, in effect, telling them, they may live as they liſt: They may follow their own ways: There is no need they ſhould put away the Evil of their Doings; for that there is a Way to get to Heaven, without it. One Thing only is needful, a ſingle Act of *At-trition* for their Sins, which may be exerted either at the Time they are telling them to a Prieſt, or when they firſt entertain'd the Thought of doing it, and receiving thereupon *Abſolution*. When their Sins begin to be multiplied, and they are growing uneaſy under the Load of them, it is but throwing them up, and ſcouring their Conſciences by *Confeſſion*, and *Abſolution*; and then, they may return to them with greater Appetite, like ſome Gluttons we have heard of, who alway cleanſe their Stomachs of all Crudities, when they are going to an Entertain-ment, that they may come to it with greater Keen-
neſs,

Keennes, and enjoy it with more *Gouſt* and Pleaſure. It may be proper to repeat this from Time to Time, as there ſhall be Occaſion, leſt a Man ſhould be ſuddenly cut off. But, if, when he comes to die, he has but Time to put forth an Act, tho' it be only of that pitiful Sort of Repentance before-mention'd, call'd *Attrition*, which few of the greateſt Sinners, in a dying Condition, eſcape falling into, and do but ſend for a Prieſt, and the Prieſt be but at hand, (of which there is but little Danger, in Places that ſwarm with them) to receive his *Confession*, and to give him *Absolution*, he has, according to *Romiſh* Principles, nothing to fear, but is as ſafe, as if he had received from the Mouth of our Lord himſelf, *when he ſhall ſit upon the Throne of his Glory*, this cheering and bleſſed Sentence, *Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*

This is really the Senſe of the Church of *Rome*, and, generally, of the People, as any one may perceive, who obſerves, among other Things, the provident Care and Forecaſt that Men commonly uſe, in *Popiſh* Countries, to have all the Sins they intend to commit, committed, and to get them all over, during the *Carnival*, and before *Lent* comes, when all the Evil they have done is to be wiped away by *Confession* and *Absolution*, and they will have to begin a new Score. And is not this plainly overthrowing the Chriſtian Doctrin of Repentance? Is it not a ſubverting and betraying of Souls? Is it not making Men to go after vain Things, which cannot profit nor deliver, to truſt on the Staff of a bruifed Reed, and to lay the Streſs of their Salvation upon what no way accompanies, nor has any Connection

with it, neglecting all the while weightier Things, which their Salvation will chiefly depend upon? What Safety can there be, and who would not be afraid to embrace or continue in the Communion of a Church, where these Doctrines are so assiduously inculcated, and these delusive Hopes so carefully cherished and kept up, in all the Members of it?

As to those *Satisfactions* which the Sinner, by the Command of the Priest, is to perform, such as *Prayer*, *Fasting*, and *Almsgiving*, they are in themselves, no Doubt of it, when they are done with right Views, and in a right Manner, very good Works. But why, for God's Sake, are they done *after*, and not rather *before* Absolution, and as Motives, or Conditions for his obtaining it? Why is he absolved from all his Sins, before it is seen whether he will, or will not, perform them? Perhaps, when he has got his *Absolution*, is discharged from his Sins, and his Salvation is made sure, (as the deluded Wretch supposes) he will not accept the *Penance* imposed upon him, or, if he does accept, will neglect to perform it: And, if he does *not* perform it, 'tis only confessing, at his next Shrifting-time, the Omission, and receiving the Injunction of *another* Penance in Satisfaction for it, which he may perform just as he did the *former*. Supposing, however, he both accepts and performs the *satisfactory* Works laid upon him, what are they? Perhaps, fasting, a while, upon all Sorts of Delicacies, except what are made of Flesh-Meats, or proceed from them; or saying a Number of *Ave-Mary's*, perchance only one, in this, or that Church, or before this, or that Altar; or giving a trifling Sum to those Churches,

or

or Altars, or to some Priest; or, it may be, 'tis going a *Pilgrimage* to some miraculous Image, or venerable Relique, which he may commonly do in jovial Company, and turn into a Frolick. Or, if he should have no mind to do these *Penances* himself, he may get them done by another; for that is allowed by the Church, and held sufficient. And, if he should meet with a rigorous and severe Confessor, who imposes upon him such Hardships as nobody will care to take off his Hands, he may leave *him*, and chuse *another*; and, in the mean while, such Penances, as are actually imposed, he may buy off, by a *Papal Indulgence*, with no great Sum. Is this the Way to destroy Sin? Is it the Way to convince Men of the great Guilt and Malignity of it, to make them sensible how offensive it is in the Sight of God, and careful to avoid it? No surely; it rather teaches them a quite contrary Lesson. For, when they observe at how cheap a Rate Sin is commonly set, at the Tribunal of Confession, they will be apt to think it a slight Matter, not a Thing which God has an eternal and irreconcilable Hatred to, as is sometimes asserted by Divines. And, tho' we were to suppose, with the Church of *Rome*, that the Guilt of it has been already remitted in *Absolution*, and that the Penalties imposed are only in Satisfaction for the temporal Punishment yet due to it, and to be borne in *Purgatory*, the Matter will not be much mended. For still they will think the Guilt of it cannot be very great, if every vicious or strolling Priest one meets with has Power to remit it; and that the temporal Punishment thereof, to be undergone in *Purgatory*, must be very light,

and next to nothing, or else very short, and but for a Moment, if such slight Penances, as are commonly enjoined by Confessors, are to be thought a just Equivalent and Satisfaction for them.

The famous Distinction between mortal and venial Sins, not only allowed, but also asserted and contended for, in the *Roman* Church, is also a dangerous Snare to Souls, as naturally leading Men to make light of the far greater Part of those Sins which are commonly committed. For, tho' it be true, and there is no Inconvenience, or Danger, in asserting, that all Sins are not equal, but some of a far deeper Dye than others; yet, to establish a *formal* Distinction between some Sins and others, and to call any of them *venial in their own Nature*, is not a safe Way of talking, but leads Men into Temptation, by abating the Horror, and making them venture upon, without Fear or Scruple, and live without Remorse in the Commission of many Sins, for which God will bring them into Judgment. If they were only to tell Men, that one and the same Sin may be *mortal*, or *venial*, according to the Circumstances it is committed with; *mortal*, if *voluntary*, committed against Knowledge, with Deliberation, and full Choice; *venial*, and remissible, through the Mercy of God, if *involuntary*, committed through Ignorance, Inadvertency, or Surprise, but always guarded against, and, as much as possible, avoided; —If they would tell them this, they would tell them the Truth, and no Danger could ensue. But, when they tell them of a whole Kind or *Species* of Sins that are *mortal*, and of others that are *venial*, in themselves, without regard to any Circumstances attending

attending them; when they give them Lists or Catalogues of both, and much longer ones of those of the *venial*, than of the *mortal* Kind, and in that of the *mortal* Kind, leave out some of the most deadly and grievous, *Fornication, for Example*, whereby it falls on-course into the List of the *venial*, and is made little, or no Account of; and, all the while, their *Casuits* and *Confessors* cannot agree among themselves what Sins we are to esteem *mortal*, and what *venial* only, there being no certain Rule to know them by; the Souls of Men are shamefully betray'd, and brought into apparent Danger of Destruction. For Destruction must ensue, and they are lost for ever, if, either deceiving themselves, or misled by the Authority of their *Guides* and *Confessors*, they shall mistake *mortal* for only *venial* Sins, and so grow careless about the Commission of them, use no Caution or Circumspection to avoid them, but heap them one upon another, as Men, under such a Persuasion, are but too apt to do.

I could easily go on, and shew you, in more Instances, how, by the natural Tendency of the Doctrines and Practices of the *Roman Church*, a holy Life is effectually undermined and subverted. But I would not be tedious; and therefore proceed to another, and what, perhaps, will be thought a yet higher Charge, That she allows some of the greatest Impieties and Immoralities of Life to be asserted and taught, in a *direct, affirmative, and dogmatical* Way.

S E C T. II.

Wherein the Hazard of being saved in the Church of Rome is further demonstrated, from the immoral and impious Maxims which are commonly and currently taught in it.

I Think, I have, some-where above, taken Notice, how the Church of *Rome* has accommodated her Principles to all Tempers and Characters ; and, if she has some *Maxims* for the Conduct of *Saints*, she has others purposely calculated for the Ease and Gratification of *Sinners* ; that so she may conciliate all Affections, gain a Dominion over all Consciences, and grasp to herself the whole World. Some of her Doctors will teach you *those* Maxims, and some *these*. And, should you go over to that Church, it will be with you, according as you fall into the Hands of the one, or of the other. If you are so unfortunate as to fall into the Hands of the *Jesuits*, or *Jesuited Divines*, (for you must not think all the dissolute and profligate *Casuists* that are to be found there are of *the Society of Jesus*) if you have the ill Luck to fall into *their* Hands, (and 'tis great odds if you do not, as these have been always observed to be the most zealous in making Profelytes) you are in a fair Way of being lost for ever. If, in Contradiction to all the Instructions you will receive from *them*, you still preserve a Judgment of Discretion, the Privilege of examining, by the Test of Reason, and Holy Scripture, the Lessons they will teach you, and stedfastly resolve in your own Mind to be

a better (and you ought, I am sure, to be a much better) Christian, than, they will tell you, you need be, you may possibly *escape with some Difficulty, or so as by Fire.* But if, they can bring you, which, above all Things, they will labour to do, to renounce your own Reason, and resign yourself up, with a Child-like Simplicity, to their Conduct, and to receive all the Opinions they shall instruct you in, and strive to possess you with, as sacred, with an implicit Respect, upon their Security and Authority only, you will soon be corrupted; you will be in the utmost Danger of renouncing all the Sentiments of Morality and Piety, and of falling into the Damnation of Hell.---Let us come to some of the Particulars.

All the World rings with the disloyal and rebellious Principles of Popery, *so hurtful to Kings*, especially to those who are not of that Communion;---As for Instance, That the Pope has a Power to dispense with the Allegiance of their Subjects, in case of their own Heresy, or their favouring of Hereticks, or a supposed Incapacity for Government.---That, in this Case, it is lawful for Subjects, if not their Duty, to *rebel*: For *Rebellion* it is, to take up Arms against them, under any Pretence of being discharged from their *Allegiance* by the Pope, who has no Right, nor any more Concern, than you or I, in the Matter. ---Nay, not only to *rebel* against, and *depose*, but also to *murder* them; for many great Churchmen, if not the Church itself, have gone so far; tho' indeed there is very little Difference between the *deposing* and *King-killing* Doctrine; it being the hardest Thing in the World for a Prince to

preserve his Life, when he has lost his Crown and Dignity. I take Notice of this, among the *immoral* Doctrines and *impious* Opinions taught and maintained in the *Roman* Church, because I hold Obedience to Kings, and all in Authority, to be a moral and Christian Duty; and if any Person, by the Authority of the Church, shall be corrupted and debauched in the Point of Loyalty, and due Subjection to his Prince, or, by the Insinuations and Instigations of his spiritual Guides and Directors, shall be push'd into actual and wilful Rebellion, I take his Salvation to be thereby as much endangered, perhaps more, than if he had been led, by their Authority or Instruction, into Theft, Adultery, or any grievous Immorality in common Life.

But indeed, in the Affairs of common Life, there is scarcely one Thing about which the *Roman Casuists* have not made the most dangerous, and, I may truly say, the most scandalous and lewdest Determinations, such as are quite abhorrent from the Spirit and Precepts of the Christian Religion, and the Laws of Nature. The Christian Religion is extremely tender of the Lives of Men. But these Gentlemen will very seriously and gravely tell you, that 'tis doubtful whether a Religious, who has made use of a Woman, may not kill her, if she offer to discover the Familiarity that has been between them; but that it is certainly lawful to kill any one who derogates from the Honour and Reputation he has acquired by his Learning and Virtue: Nay, that any Man may kill another that gives him the Lye, or a Box on the Ear, or strikes him with a Stick, tho' he does not continue the Assault, to the endangering the Life, or so much

much as the Limb, of the Person assaulted, but runs away, when he has done it. They have also resolved, that a Woman who has sinned, to save her Credit, may lawfully, at any time before the Birth of the Child, procure Abortion, and that it is not Murther to do so. And 'tis a Mercy they do not allow her to murther it after it is born, if she can thereby avoid the Shame of the World; for there is little Difference in the Cases. And, as in regard to the Lives of others, so in regard to their Goods and Possessions, their Decisions are extremely licentious. They allow Servants to steal from their Masters, for the Value of their Service, if it be greater than the Salary or Wages they are to receive for it; of which, to be sure, they may very safely be left Judges: That it is lawful to steal, not only in an extreme Necessity, but in an heavy one; so that a Man, if he be poor, tho' in no Danger of starving with Cold or Hunger, may take from another what he shall eat, or drink, or where-withal he shall be clothed, without the least Scruple. And then, how few will be found among the lower Ranks of Men, who, having been well taught this Lesson, will not hold themselves poor enough to be entitled to so small a Privilege? And as to Restitution of what has been taken away by Theft, the Case is resolved thus: That a Man is not bound, under Pain of mortal Sin, to restore that which he stole by divers petty inconsiderable Thefts, how much soever the Sum total amounts to. And, if they will not oblige him to restore what he has stolen from others, we can hardly expect they should oblige him to give Alms of such Things as he has, and are his own. Accordingly, they say, there is scarce any one bound to
give

give Alms, if one is only obliged to give out of his Abundance. For 'tis hard to find, among secular Persons, any one that has an Abundance, no, not among Kings. With respect to the good Names and Reputations of others, 'tis held but a *venial Sin* (ten thousand of which, they maintain, are not equal to one that is mortal, and therefore cannot affect any one's Salvation) to defame and load a Man with false Accusations, in order to defend one's own Honour, or to lessen his great Authority, which one finds hurtful to one's self. In Matters of Truth and Veracity, which Men owe to one another, Equivocations and mental Reservations, in order to deceive, are pronounced lawful, even when we answer upon Oath: And, if a Person shall swear he did not do a Thing which he really did, having a secret Meaning, either of some other Thing which he did not do, or of another Way of doing it, or of some other Truth, which he, in his Mind, adds to it, he is neither perjur'd, nor a Lyar. And, lastly, in the Matter of Covenants and Engagements, particularly with Hereticks, or those who are so reputed in that Church, a Catholick is not bound to keep Faith. These are some of the Decisions of the Casuists, for the Direction of Men in their Dealings and Intercourse with one another; bad enough of all Conscience! Their Decisions concerning the due Government of ourselves are no better. But those of them which regard the *sensual* and *carnal* Inclinations are so *dissolute*, *licentious*, and *impure*, that I am really ashamed to transcribe them into these Papers.

Let us take a short View of some of their *Maxims* and Determinations concerning Religion and Piety. — Faith does not seem to come within any special and
absolute

absolute Precept.—'Tis enough to have one Act of Faith in our whole Lives.—To believe in one God is all that seems to be necessary,—but an explicit Belief that he is a Rewarder does not seem to be so.—Frequent Confession and Communion, even in those who live like Heathens, is a Mark of Predestination.—We are not bound to love our Neighbour by an internal formal Act; but we obey the Command of loving him, by external Acts only. Which is as much as to say, we need not trouble ourselves about our inward Affections, provided our outward Behaviour towards him be fair and honest, if we do but live easily, and well with him. This Representation of Christianity, as it is very odious, so it is also false, *the inward vital Principle of Charity* being often, in the New Testament, distinguish'd from *the outward and visible Effects* of it, and both equally commanded. 'Tis so, particularly, in *Matt. v. 44.* And St. Paul not only distinguishes between them, but expressly declares (as if these *Casuits* had been in his View) that one without the other is unavailing: *'Tho' I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.* But it is no Wonder we are not obliged to love our Brother, when we are not bound to love God. 'Tis probable (say some of them) *that the Precept of loving God does not rigorously, and of itself, oblige, no, not once every fifth Year.* Others maintain, *a Man is not to be condemned of mortal Sin, that never had any Act of Love to God, but one, in his whole Life.* And there are those who hold, *he is not obliged to love him at all, but 'tis enough, if he does not hate him.* Very precisely and mathematically determin'd! Very piously too! These,
O ye

O ye Protestants, are the Guides and Directors of Conscience which ye throw yourselves amongst, when ye go over to the Church of *Rome*! It was said by one of old Time, concerning the *Roman* Casuists, that, *instead of keeping Men at a safe Distance from all Sin, they made it their Business to shew them how they might make the nearest Approaches, without falling into it.* But he was too reserved: He did not do them Justice. For they do really teach us to be wicked: They justify, instead of exterminating, the corrupt Maxims of Men, and find out Ways how we may put them in Practice, with entire Security of Conscience.

But, besides these, and other *particular Opinions*, inconsistent with all Christian *Piety* and *Morality*, they have one or two *general Principles*, from whence a Man may easily fetch a sufficient Justification of every *Impiety* or *Immorality* he is inclin'd to. These are the Doctrines of *Probability*, and of *the right Direction of the Intention*. Any one (they advance) may venture, with a very safe Conscience, upon any Practice, the Lawfulness of which is probable (tho' the Unlawfulness of it be more probable): And the Lawfulness of it must be esteemed probable, if any considerable Reason can be brought in favour of it. Now (say they) the Opinion and Authority of one grave Doctor, being a considerable Reason in favour of it, will make it probably lawful, and, consequently, safe. Upon which Principle, a Man may allow himself in almost every Vice he can get by, or inclines to, there being scarcely any thing so vile and monstrous in Practice, which some of the Doctors of the *Roman Church* (whom you may call grave ones, if you please) have
not

not asserted and defended, or which he may not get one or other of them to assert and defend, if he goes about it.

With respect to the right Direction of the Intention, they explain themselves after this Manner: If you propose to do any thing that is very wicked, you are to *divert* your Intention from the Evil or Immorality of it, and to *direct* it to some other Object, to some Effect or Consequence of the Action, which, considered in the general, and abstractedly from the present Case, it is allowable to pursue. So doing, your Conscience will be safe. By the Innocency of your Intention, the Viciousness of the Action will be corrected, and all Things will be pure to you. By this miraculous and Wonder-working Principle, a Man, without sinning, may send a Challenge, murder his Father, or debauch his Neighbour's Wife. For, in the first Case, 'tis but *intending* the Vindication of his own Honour, (which is lawful) not spilling the Blood of the Person challenged: In the second Case, 'tis only *intending*, not the taking away his Father's Life, but getting to himself (in which there is no Harm) an Inheritance: And in the third Case, 'tis but *intending* his own Gratification, not the injuring his Neighbour, or defiling his Bed. With these *Intentions*, the Action will be indifferent, and the Actor, as to Matter of Conscience, entirely safe. 'Tis impossible any thing should be said in the Defence or Mitigation of such abominable Principles as these two, or such horrid Maxims and Opinions as those before-mention'd. But, as something is said in behalf of the Church, notwithstanding their
being

being taught and inculcated therein, you shall honestly hear what it is.

They say, then, that the *Principles* and *Maxims* before-mention'd have been condemned by the Pope; which is indeed true: And not only these, but forty more, of the like Strain, and almost equally tending to *Impiety* and *Libertinism*, were condemned by *Pope Innocent XI*, and a general Congregation of *Cardinals*, in the Year 1679. But then, let it be considered, *in the first Place*, that this is a plain Demonstration of the *Factum*, which otherwise, perhaps, would have been doubted of, or deny'd, that these Doctrines and Opinions *are* commonly and notoriously taught in that Church, and that it is not a false and slanderous Accusation, when we lay them to its Charge. And, *in the next Place*, it should be consider'd, that the Pope's Decree of Condemnation signifies little to your *French* Papists, or, perhaps, to most others, who believe not a Word of the personal Infallibility of his *Holiness*, and that it will have with *them*, supposing them consistent with themselves, and to think agreeably to their known Principles, no more Weight, than the Censure of the College of *Sorbone*, or the *Theological Faculty of Louvain*, or of any other Society of Men, who shall have (as 'tis thought they easily may have) as much *rational* Knowledge, and *theological* Learning, as his *Holiness*, and the *Cardinals*. All these, very consistently with their Principles, may still hold, as true, the Propositions condemned, and continue to teach and propagate them. And, as to those who maintain the *Infallibility* of the Pope, they will easily perceive how much

Tenderness

Tenderness he discovers for, and how softly he speaks in his Censure and Condemnation of them. He condemns them, and each of them, *ut minimum, tanquam scandalosas, et in Praxi perniciosas*; that is, to say the least of them (if I rightly understand his Holiness's Latin) they are scandalous, and pernicious in the Practice. He had no mind, you see, to say the most and the worst he could of them. He insinuates, he could have fix'd upon them a worse Character than he does, to give some Content to those who had been scandaliz'd with them; but he does not care to do it, lest the Authors or the Abettors of them should be too much offended. In short, he gives them the gentlest Characteristicks that are ever used to be given to Doctrines or Positions, when he takes upon him to condemn them. He does not call them false, heretical, impious, or blasphemous, which he might justly have done, and is commonly the Style, when he damns any Doctrine sincerely, heartily, and with a good Will. He does not call them so much as erroneous, or leaning to Error, as the Style is, when the Doctrine is not held to be absolutely false, and heretical. But they are only scandalous, that is, apt to give Offence, and pernicious in the Practice, which his Holiness very well knew they might be, and yet true in the Theory, all the while. The Propositions of the Book entitled *The Maxims of the Saints*, written by Monsieur de Cambray, were condemned by a Constitution of Pope Innocent XII, in stronger Terms than the *Maxims* of the *Casuits* are here. For he call'd them not only pernicious in the Practice, as his Predecessor call'd these, but, withal, erroneous. Nevertheless, the Bishop

shop of *Meaux* was not a little dissatisfied with *this* Condemnation, thinking it *too soft*, and *next to nothing*. And the same Thoughts the Reverend Fathers of the Society undoubtedly have of the Decree of 1679, that it is, and was design'd to be, very *lame and defective*, and that the Condemnation of their *Maxims*, either as *scandalous* and offensive, or as *pernicious in the Practice*, does not, in itself, imply, by any fair Reasoning, or Rule in the Church, their being *false*, or hinder any one from maintaining the *Truth* of them, in *Speculation*. But indeed the condemning them as only *scandalous*, and *pernicious in the Practice*, will be rather interpreted as a kind of Allowance of them, when they are put in Practice with so much Secrecy, that no Scandal can be thereby given, and when *the pernicious Effects*, which they commonly produce, can be prevented, as, in particular Cases, they may be.

Perhaps it may be urged, that he not only condemned, but forbid all Persons whatsoever to defend or publish these *Maxims*. Therefore, we may suppose, they were no longer taught, defended, or published in that Church; and that the Consciences of the People are not *now*, as *formerly*, misled and debauch'd by them. But did not *Alexander VII* do the same thing before *him*, without any visible Effect? And what Grounds have we to suppose, that the Decree of *Innocent XI* would have, or how does it appear that it *has* had, any greater Effect, than that of his Predecessor, of *happy Memory*? Have not the *Jesuits* been, since the Year 1679, the very same Men they had been before? and are they not so to this Day? Have there been no *Complaints*,

no *Invectives*, from honest, ingenuous *Roman Catholicks*, for the last seventy or eighty Years, of the Looseness and Profligacy of their Morals? Are there none now? And tho' the World, at this Time, does not ring with it so much as it did in some former Times, it is, because they are weary, and cannot be always clamouring against the same Thing, and because, finding them intractable and incorrigible by all the Methods that have been, or can be used, for their Reformation, they give them over, as Men abandon'd and lost, and leave them to follow their own crooked and pernicious Ways. And we may venture to foretell, they will never return from them, never abandon a Morality so sweet, engaging, enticing, so palatable and pleasing to Flesh and Blood; a Morality, whereby they draw such infinite Shoals of Men and Women (like Fish to the Net) to their Confession-Seats, and increase the Numbers of their Party; by the Help of which, they not only trample on the Bishops, and Parochial Clergy, but overtop and keep down all the other Orders of *Religious*, and govern the World.

But it is further said, that these are only the Opinions of private Men, not the Doctrines of the Church. Now, 'tis not easy to know, in many Instances, what *are* the Doctrines of the Church; and very learned Men of their own Communion have often differ'd among themselves upon those Heads. And it is very observable, that this, or that, shall be, or shall not be, the Doctrine of the Church, according to the Service it is to perform, or as the present Occasion shall require. But, for the unlearned Laity, they have scarce any Measure, whereby to

judge what is the Doctrine of the Church, besides attending to the Doctrine of their immediate Guides, and those who have the Direction of their Consciences. Whatever these teach and inculcate, the other always suppose to be the Sense and Doctrine of the Church, and are apt to receive, with the greatest Simplicity. And as these are, not here and there one, but a vast Body of Men, swarming in all Places of the *Roman* Communion, potent, factious, inveigling, ruling in the Courts of Princes, almost engrossing to themselves the Education, or forming the Manners and Principles of Youth, and the directing the Consciences of others, 'tis evident, that the poor Souls already in the Communion of that Church must needs be in the most perilous Situation imaginable, and that *Protestants*, forewarned of the Danger, cannot throw themselves into it, without the greatest Temerity, and infinite Hazard of their Salvation.

S E C T. III.

That the Communion of the Church of Rome is unlawful, by reason of the false Doctrines, and the Profession to be made of them, therein required.

TH E R E is no sober and unprejudiced *Protestant*, I believe, but will readily own, that the Church of *Rome*, amidst all the Disorders she lies in, has preserved the Essentials of Christianity. Nevertheless, we cannot think this enough, either to satisfy the Minds of those who were bred up in the Communion of that Church, and keep them easy in it, or to reconcile *us* to it: For, as she has raised upon

upon the old and sure Foundations a Superstructure of *Hay and Stubble*, we cannot think it safe to enter into, and trust ourselves in it: Or, (to speak out of Figure, and more plainly) since she is not content to profess and practise the Christian Religion in the State wherein *Jesus Christ* and the Apostles left it, and delivered it to the Church, but has made, with an intolerable Presumption, many unwarrantable Additions to it, corrupted it with divers Errors of the most heinous and malignant Nature, imposes those Errors upon all her Members, nor will suffer any to abide with her, without the Belief and Practice of them, we cannot but think ourselves, not only at Liberty, but indispensibly oblig'd, in Faithfulness to our Lord, in Regard to the Safety of our own Consciences, and for the greater Security of our Salvation, to shew our Detestation of those Errors, by avoiding her Communion, and by exercising, amongst ourselves, the Religion of *Jesus Christ*, in the same Purity and Simplicity, as near as may be, wherein we received it from him.

For my own Part, I have too much Regard to the Peace of God's Church, too fervent a Desire to promote Unity amongst Christians, so far as 'tis practicable, and the Principles of Christianity will permit, and too high Notions of the Advantages and Desireableness even of *Catholick Communion*, if such a Blessing could be accomplish'd, to go about to make any *Protestant* believe, that every doctrinal Error, of what Kind soever, that has crept into the Church, even tho' it be become a Part of her Faith, and she propounds and commends it to us, will be a sufficient Justification of his withdrawing himself

altogether from her Communion. I think, an Error, that does not destroy the Foundation, ought to be borne with, for the sake of Peace. And this I take to be the Principle of all *Protestants*; unless we are to except a few hot-headed, or wrong-headed Men, who, acting upon no Principle at all, but only following the Impulse of a blind Zeal, think it a just Cause for withdrawing themselves from any Church, if it holds any Opinion, tho' ever so innocent, that is not perfectly agreeable to their preconceived Notions, and Apprehensions of Things. Upon this Principle, we neither reject from our Communion the *Lutheran Churches*, nor shun theirs, notwithstanding the Doctrine they uphold of *Consubstantiation*, or the real Presence of the natural Body of our Saviour in the Bread of the *Eucharist*, which we can by no means approve of, but think manifestly and grossly erroneous. Upon the same Principle, the *French Protestant Churches* did (in the Synod of *Charenton*, in 1631) openly and solemnly declare, they were ready to receive the Faithful of the *Ausburg Confession* to their Communion, notwithstanding *that*, and some other Errors of lesser Importance; *for as much as the Churches of that Confession do* (say they) *agree with the other Reformed Churches in the principal and fundamental Points of the true Religion, and that there is neither Superstition nor Idolatry in their Worship.* For their Opinion of *Consubstantiation*, as Monsieur *Daille* has observ'd, [1] *in the Sense and Terms they hold it, has no Venom in it, nor engages in any thing contrary to Piety;*

[1] *Apol. for the Reform'd Churches*, c. 7.

being neither follow'd with Adoration, neither destroying, nor dividing, nor mutilating the Sacrament, nor making it an expiatory Sacrifice for the Living and the Dead, as the *Romanists* declare the *Eucharist* to be. Neither should we forsake the Church of *Rome* for any Doctrine or Opinion which we should think erroneous, if, at the same time, it was as harmless as this; not that of Purgatory, for Example, if, like the *Lutheran Consubstantiation*, it was but a mere Speculation, nothing but a Whimsy they had got into their Heads, if it neither entered into, and defiled their Worship, nor was turn'd to any other base and scandalous Uses, such as we see it to be, in that Church. Alas! this is far enough from being the Case between us and the Papists. It is not this, or any other solitary innocent Error, or two or three such, we stand upon with them: But 'tis a Mass, an Heap of Errors, and such an Heap, as you shall not meet with in any other Church, or Company of Christians, upon the Face of the Earth, that we are acquainted with. And, in this Heap, there are few that are innocent, but the far greater Part extremely malignant in their Nature and Influences, communicating, in such Plenty, their noxious Qualities, and shedding such Contagion all around, that we dare not embrace, or come near them: Some of them diminishing, and representing to the greatest Disadvantage, the tender Love and Compassions of God towards Mankind; such as that of his keeping those who have truly repented of all their Sins, are already pardon'd, and in a State of Grace, tormented in the Flames of Purgatory, for hundreds, or perhaps thousands of Years, unless

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some mercenary Priest, for Pieces of Silver, or any other charitable Person, out of stark Love and Good-nature, will fetch them out : Some of them encroaching upon the mediatorial Office of our Saviour, as praying to Saints and Angels to intercede for us ; and at the same time highly injurious to his Love, as if *they* were more merciful than *he*, (as, upon some Occasions, they stick not to say, concerning the Virgin *Mary*, in plain Words) and that he would not succour us, unless *they* were to entreat, or she, in *the Right of a Mother*, to command and order him to do it : Some, again, as highly reflecting upon the Sufficiency of that Sacrifice of himself, which he, *once for all*, offer'd upon the Cross ; as the Sacrifice of the Mass, for supplying what is wanting and deficient in it : And, lastly, many of them superseding the Necessity of an holy Life, by shewing us, as is pretended, a sure Way to Heaven without it ; such are *Papal Indulgences*, *Sacerdotal Absolutions*, and the mighty Value that is set upon an *external and ceremonial Righteousness*.

If it were possible to live in external Communion with the Church of *Rome*, without believing, or pretending, and seeming, to believe, these Doctrines ; if one had only to go to their Churches, and to hear their Priests (after a few good unexceptionable Prayers) talk of these Things in their Pulpits, but were still at Liberty to think of the Matters commended to him as he should see Cause, a Protestant's Access to that Church would be a good deal easier and safer than it is. But the Case is otherwise ; and there is scarce any Error in the Church,
which

which every private Member is not oblig'd, *directly* or *indirectly*, *explicitly* or *implicitly*, to profess. They have (in my Opinion, very foolishly and impolitickly) cramm'd all their Corruptions into their publick Offices, which he is to frequent and use. Here, not only the *Legendary* Miracles and Exploits of their Saints are recited, and he is to bless God for having enabled and strengthened them to do this, and that, and t'other wonderful Work, which God knows he never did, but their Merits (which are none) are remembered, and the Prevalency of them for his Deliverance from all Evil, ghostly and bodily, (surely, a grievous Error, and and highly derogating from the Merits of Christ!) is plainly recognized and acknowledged. *Transubstantiation*, *Purgatory*, and *the Efficacy of Alms and Prayers to rescue Souls out of it*, are so interwoven with the *Mass*, that he cannot go to, and join in it, without acknowledging, in Effect, those Errors. And, indeed, the peculiar Corruptions and false Doctrines of that Church are so incorporated with the Devotions of it, that 'tis impossible to perform the common Acts of Communion with it, without a *virtual* and *implicit* Acknowledgment of the Truth of them.

But this is not all: An *explicit* Acknowledgment and Profession of the Truth of them is now become necessary. Before the Council of *Trent*, a Man might be a Member of that Church, whatever he thought of her Doctrines, if he did not oppose and dispute them. But the Case is alter'd; and to be, now, a Member of it, he must declare that *he holds the same Faith which the Church holds*. But every

new Convert is more *explicitly* to declare, and make a Profession of *his* Faith, in the Words of Pope Pius's Creed; which all *Protestants*, I hope, who find in themselves an Inclination to let themselves be converted to that Church, will take Notice of, and seriously consider, before they go any further, and are so far *in*, that there will be no returning. Let them consider, that turning *Papist* is not barely forsaking our Churches, and repairing to their Chapels, as they are apt to imagine. That indeed is easily done; but the Matter does not end there. For here is a Creed, pretty hard too to be believed, which they must not only learn and understand, but reconcile themselves to, before they can be reconciled to the *Roman* Church, and admitted into it. In this Creed, there are no fewer than twelve new Articles, most or each of them containing in it more than one Falsehood, and that too directly opposite and contradictory to all their former Notions, and Prepositions. Will they have the Patience to sift, and examine every one of these Articles, and every single Proposition contain'd in every one of them, before they embrace the Communion of that Church? Undoubtedly they ought, and that too with great Care and Diligence, with all the Attention of their own Minds they are capable of, and all the Assistances they can readily procure from others. But, to do this in the Manner that is requisite, and as every honest Man should, will be a Work of Time, and take up, perhaps, the whole Lives of those who have no better Lights than such kind of Men generally have who are in any Danger of being seduced to Popery. And, after all, if, in the twelve Articles

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to be thus examined, there be but one Article, or one Proposition, which he cannot bring himself to believe true, or if, believing them to be *all* true, there be only one which he cannot believe, or has any Doubt of its being, *necessary to Salvation* (for the Creed declares every one of them to be so); in either of these Cases, he must stick in the Church where he is, unless he can resolve to dissemble with God and the Church, and to make an open Declaration and Profession of firmly believing what he has no Apprehension and Belief of. And, if he does *that*, he not only shews himself an inconsiderate, rash, headlong Man, one also of no Sincerity, no Integrity, no Conscience, but brings a great deal of Guilt upon his Soul. Thus, while he changes his Religion, and goes over to the Church of *Rome*, to secure his Salvation, he plainly undermines and subverts it, and, by the self-same Act whereby he throws himself into *that* Church, he throws himself, and plunges, into eternal Perdition and Destruction.

SECT. IV.

That the Communion of the Church of Rome is unlawful, and cannot be embraced without grievous Sin, by reason of the Idolatry that is practised in it.

THE Charge of *Idolatry* is commonly resented by *Roman Catholicks*, as the *severest* of all those that are used to be fix'd, by *Protestants*, upon their Church; and undoubtedly it is. Indeed, it
is

is the highest that can be fix'd upon any Church. But, as high as it is, it is well grounded, and may be easily made good, against *theirs*. In order to which, it will be proper briefly to set before you the true Notion of *Idolatry*, and then make appear, that the *Roman Church*, in some of her daily and indispensable Practices, does really commit it: Which being made out, the Sequel, viz. that *the Communion of that Church is unlawful, and cannot be embraced without grievous Sin*, will be too plain, to stand in need of a formal Deduction.

It will be proper to give you a short Account of the Nature of *Idolatry*, and to set before you the several Sorts of it, because the *Roman Catholicks*, since this Charge has been advanced against them, have set up a new Notion of this Impiety, (the only Notion of it, they will tell you, it is) in order to clear themselves from that Imputation. *Idolatry* (they say) is nothing but worshipping the heavenly Bodies, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, or any other visible and corporeal Deity, as the supreme God, so as to exclude all Apprehension of a spiritual and invisible Godhead. According to which Notion of *Idolatry*, no one can be an *Idolater*, 'till he has lost all Sense and Apprehension of the true God, the God of *Israel*, the Maker of Heaven and Earth. And, if this were the Case, the Church of *Rome* must be pronounced innocent, and we must be oblig'd to retract the Charge, as false and injurious, which our Divines have been, one after another, ever since the *Reformation*, loading her with. For it cannot be pretended, she has utterly cast off God almighty from being her God, and put Sun, or Moon, or any corporeal

corporeal Being, in his Stead. But the Mischief is, it discharges too many from being *Idolaters*, such as the holy Scripture calls so. It may be a Doubt, whether it does not clear the Heathens themselves, or most of them, from that Imputation. For, upon diligent Inquiry, it will, probably, be found, that they had some Sense and Apprehension of one supreme Deity, and he the same whom the *Jews* worshipped. This is certain, that, as to the *Athenians*, St. Paul own'd to them, that they worshipped the same God whom he declared unto them, tho' they did it ignorantly. However, the *Jews* are fairly brought off. For, amidst all their Backslidings, they did not forget the God of their Fathers, but worshipped him together with their Idols. It is not doubted by any, but that throwing off all Sense and Apprehension of the true God, and substituting any visible corporeal Being in his room, is one, and the worst, *Species* of *Idolatry*. But the Error lies in asserting *this* to be the *only Species* of that Impiety, there being two more, one or other of which most of the Laws and Prohibitions, Cautions and Threatnings, concerning *Idolatry*, both in the Old and New Testament, refer to. One is, worshipping the true God under a sensible Image and Representation. This is the *Idolatry* forbidden in the *second Commandment*. And this is that which was practised by the *Israelites* towards the *golden Calf* which they compelled *Aaron* to make for them, and the *two Calves* which *Jeroboam* set up in *Dan* and *Bethel*, as the Symbols and Representations of the true God, who brought them out of the Land of *Egypt*. For the *Jews* could not be so stupid, as to believe

believe they were brought out thence by the Power of those very Images they themselves had made, and which were not existent, in their present Forms, 'till after their coming out of the Land of *Egypt*; not the two latter, 'till several Ages after. The other is, associating with the true God a created Being, of any Kind whatever, and worshipping *that* together with *him*. And this Sort of *Idolatry* *Solomon* fell into, in the latter Part of his Life, through the Persuasion or Instigation of his Wives, serving the Lord, but, at the same Time, worshipping *Moloch*, *Milcom*, *Chemosh*, and *Astoreth*, the Abomination of the *Zidonians*, and other neighbouring Nations, jointly with him. And this was also the *Idolatry* of those Nations whom the King of *Assyria* planted in *Samaria*, after they had been taught, by one of the Priests of *Bethel*, whom the King sent to them, how they should fear the Lord. *They feared the Lord, and served their own Gods, and their graven Images*. And this is the *Idolatry* which we charge upon the Church of *Rome*. They worship the true God, but give, at the same time, *divine Honours* to some of the meanest of his Creatures.

The Adoration of the *Crucifix*, and of the *Images* of the Saints, is plainly an *idolatrous* Worship of this Sort. The *Romanists*, indeed, will tell you, they only reverence them, as we do the *Bible*, or the *holy Sacrament*. Or, if they, at any time, confess, that they do pay them *Worship* and *Veneration*, (which indeed is the Language the Council of *Trent* affects to talk in, upon this Subject) they would have you believe, that, as those Words are vague
and

and ambiguous in their Signification, and denote very different Conceptions, different Sorts or Degrees of Honour and Respect, so it is one of the lowest which they exhibit to such Objects, a *civil* Worship or Veneration, not a *divine*. But, if this be all, what means their setting them up, in order to be worshipped, in their Churches, rather than in their Houses, or elsewhere? What mean their *kissing*, their *incensing* of them, their *setting up Wax Lights*, their *falling down*, and *prostrating* themselves before them, and *fixing their Eyes* upon them, when they say their Prayers? Are *all* these the customary Expressions of *civil* Respect and Honour? Are they not the Acts whereby they worship the Creator? Do they worship him with any other, unless, perhaps, we are to except Sacrifice? And, with respect to the *Cross* in particular, what means its being consecrated with Prayers, *that it may be a saving Remedy to Mankind, the Establishment of the Faith, for the Increase of good Works, and the Redemption of Souls, a Comfort and Protection against the cruel Darts of the Enemy, and that as many as pray and bow down themselves before it, may find Health, both of Soul and Body*? If it was not consider'd as an Object of *divine* Adoration, what means the *Good-Friday* Service, and all the Ceremonies thereof; the Priests and the People, two and two, approaching it, *bowing their Knees*, three Times, before they *kiss* it, and devoutly adoring it? What mean the *Hymns* that are then sung? — *We adore thy Cross, O Lord, &c.—Behold the Wood of the Cross, on which the Saviour of the World hung: O come let us*
adore,

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adore, &c. [m] What means the Prayer that is put up to it, that *it would strengthen the Righteous,*
and

[m] Left I should give the *Roman Catholics* a Handle for saying, I had not dealt fairly in the Translation of this Hymn, I have not rendered the Words, *Venite adoremus, O come let us adore it*, the material Cross, which the People were just before moved to look up to. Yet I might have done so, without exposing myself to any *just* Censure or Reflection, as if I had added the Word, *it*, on purpose to misrepresent the Intention of the the Church, and to make her speak in such a Manner as I would have her. For it was plainly the Intention of both the Composer of this Hymn, and of the Church, that the Worship, which they here call upon one another to perform, should be performed to the *material Cross*, presented before them. This is evident from the *Rubrick*, which three or four Times speaks of *adoring* the *material Cross*; first, directing the Priest that officiates to put off his Shoes, to draw near to, and *adore the Cross*, afterwards the Ministers of the Altar, with the other Clergy and Laity, to approach it, two and two, and, in like manner, *to adore it*; and, while the Cross is *adoring*, directing the Quire to Sing divers Hymns, one of which begins with these Words, *We adore thy Cross, O Lord*. Can any thing be plainer than that the *wooden Cross* is the Object, which they, in this Hymn, invite one another to *adore*? They pretend to say, no; it is the Saviour of the World, that hung upon the Cross, they are bid to *adore*, as being the Person last mention'd. But let any Scholar, or sensible Man judge, if this be a reasonable Construction. The Priest uncovers the Cross: He bids the People look up to it: Whereupon the People presently cry out, *O come let us adore*—Adore whom, or what? Not, surely, the Saviour, tho' last mention'd, but the Cross, which had been just before exhibited, and shewn to them, and they were bid to look stedfastly upon, and, on the Sight of which, they break out into this invitatory Form, *O come let us adore*, or worship. Suppose the Hymn had begun thus, — *Behold the Saviour of the World, who now sitteth on the right Hand of the Father: O come let us adore*, &c. There is not, I am satisfied, a *Roman Catholic*
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and give Pardon to the Guilty? Is not this properly to worship it? If our Saviour himself was to descend from Heaven, and present himself before them, could they receive him otherwise? Nor, indeed, need they do it, if they could, in case the Doctrine of St. Thomas be true, that *the Image of the Cross ought to be worshipped with the same Worship as the Saviour who suffered on it.*

The *Adoration* of the *Host*, or consecrated Wafer in the *Eucharist*, is also a Practice plainly *idolatrous*. At the *Consecration*, and *Elevation* of it in the Mass, all who are present fall down and worship it, as they do also, when it is carried in Procession through the Streets. And they readily own, *this Adoration is a religious or divine Worship*, in the highest Sense, and utmost Propriety of the Word; forasmuch as they suppose, that whole and entire Christ, his Soul, Body, and Divinity, is there present before them. Here, then, is a manifest *Idolatry*, in case it be true, that there is no *Transubstantiation*, or Conversion of the Substance of the Bread and Wine into the natural Body and Blood of Christ. And some of themselves honestly confess as much, That, if they are mistaken in the Doctrine of *Transub-*

stantiation in England, who has any Taste, or tolerable Notion of Justice and Propriety in Composition, that would suppose it was the Father, incidentally mention'd, they were invited to *adore*, not the Saviour of the World, whom they were bid to eye, and look up to. And whoever thinks it necessary to construe the Form, which I have here put down, as inviting to adore the Saviour, and not the Father, will be oblig'd to construe the *Good-Friday Hymn*, as inviting to adore the *Wood* of the Cross, not the Saviour of the World, who hung upon it.

stantiation,

stantiation, they must be some of the greatest *Idolaters* in the World. The Jesuit *Caster*, in particular, makes no Difficulty to say, that, “ *if that Doctrine*
“ *be not true, the Idolatry of the Heathens, in wor-*
“ *shipping some golden or silver Statue, or any Images*
“ *of their Gods, or the Laplanders worshipping a red*
“ *Rag, or the Egyptians an Animal, is more excusable,*
“ *than of Christians that worship a Bit of Bread.*” [n]
But, because all of them will not say this, but many pretend that their Intention to worship Christ, altho’ they should be mistaken, and he be not there, will excuse them from the Guilt of *Idolatry*, and make their Act perfectly *innocent*, if not also *meritorious*; and this Pretence may seem plausible to some, we will see, if there be *any*, and I believe we shall soon see, there is *no* Solidity and Truth in it.

Now, to my Apprehension, it may be as well pretended, that a false and erroneous Persuasion of a Man’s Mind, concerning the Innocency and Lawfulness of an Act (suppose) of Cruelty, Persecution, or Murther, he taking it for an innocent, and, perhaps, laudable Act, when it is really a very wicked one, will make him perfectly guiltless; as it can be suggested, that his Error or Mistake concerning the Object of his Worship, he taking it for a divine Being, and, therefore, adorable, when it is not so, will make his Adoration of it cease to be *Idolatry*, or discharge him from the Guilt and Imputation of that Impiety. But the Scripture plainly teaches us, that, in the former Case, his Error and Misappre-

[n] Enchirid. Contr. c. 8. de Eucharist. Sacram. p. 308.

hension will not excuse him. For St. *Paul* consider'd himself as one of the greatest of Sinners, and standing in need of the Mercy of God, for what he had done in persecuting the Church, tho' he did it *ignorantly, and in Unbelief*, intending thereby to perform, and being fully persuaded in his own Mind he was, all the while, performing, to God a most acceptable Service. And I have no Doubt but Popish Persecutors, such as the Duke of *Alva*, *Dominick*, (notwithstanding his being canonized) our Queen *Mary*, and many others, will be brought to Judgment, at the last Day, for those Rivers of innocent Blood they have caused to be spilt, notwithstanding they *intended* (if they did really *intend*) to promote thereby the Glory of God. And, if the right Intention of Persecutors and Murtherers will not excuse *them*, I don't see how it can excuse a *Bread-worshipper*. Men ought to be very careful what Opinions they take up, especially Opinions that are *in order to Practice*. In those that are merely *speculative*, they may err more safely, and therefore need not be so exceeding anxious about the Truth of them. But those that are to be the Rule of our moral and religious Practice should be more carefully examined and look'd into, before they are embrac'd; especially, when the Practice is of so great Concernment, as the Worship of a true, or a false God. I take, therefore, the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* to be one of the most dangerous a Man can entertain, if it prove false; for which Reason, he ought to insist upon Evidence irresistible, and clear Demonstration, before he yields his Assent to it. But, if he will be so rash and imprudent, as to receive it, upon such

slight Grounds and Motives, and Shadows of Proof, as are commonly brought for it by the Missionaries and others, it cannot be said he is inculpably mistaken. And, if he falls into Creature-worship, in Consequence (a horrid and terrible Consequence!) of his Mistake, I doubt, it will be accounted to him for *formal Idolatry*, and he must be content to bear the Imputation and Punishment of it.

There is a common and popular Way of talking upon this Head, which some Notice should be taken of. If ('tis said) any Subject shall happen to take one of the Courtiers for the King, and, thereupon, shall make him a Tender of some Duty or Homage, that is due only to the sovereign Power, will the King be so furly as to resent it, and punish him for it? If not, how can we suppose that God will be offended at our worshipping the Host, tho' it were still Bread, if we do not take it to be such, but the Body, Soul, and Divinity of Christ, and direct to him, in the Purpose of our Minds, that Adoration which we render to it. This Apology for the *Idolatry* of worshipping the *Host* puts me in mind of Lord Shaftsbury's Apology for *Atheism* [o], they are so like: " Suppose (says the noble Writer) some
 " Prince, or Father of his Country, had made happy a
 " considerable Part of Mankind under his Care; but
 " that, nevertheless, some of this Number were so igno-
 " rantly bred, or of so remote a Province, as to have
 " been out of the hearing of his Name and Actions;
 " or, hearing of them, should be so puzzled with odd
 " and contrary Stories, told up and down concerning
 " him, that they knew not what to think, whether

[o] Letter concerning Enthusiasm, p. 57.

" there

“ there were really in the World any such Person;
“ should be not, in good Truth, be ridiculous to take
“ Offence at this, and to think in earnest of revenging
“ himself on them ?” But, as these Cases are nothing
like parallel, so neither are those under our present
Consideration. To make them look any thing
alike, it should have been supposed, that a facti-
ous and designing Party in the Nation had set up
the Claim of a *Jack Cade*, a *Wat Tyler*, a *Perkin
Warbeck*, some one or other of the meanest of the
King’s Subjects, to one of his Kingdoms, and that
this Party, and their Partizans, were ready, as of-
ten as any Occasion for it has arisen, to recognize
his Title to it, and to behave towards him, as the
rightful Sovereign of that Kingdom. In such a
Case, I guess, the Prince would not be thought
unreasonably morose and ill-humour’d, if he should
shew himself jealous of his Honour, and be offended
at those who should thus go about to diminish, and
rob him of it. The Application is easy, and I shall
not need to make it; and shall now only say,
upon the whole, that, if the *Papists* are to be ab-
solved from the Charge of *Idolatry*, upon the
Ground we have been mentioning, I don’t know
but all the *Idolaters* that ever were, or are now, in
the World, must be, upon the same Ground, ab-
solved also. For, pray, who worships any thing
which he does not take for a Divinity, and esteem
a proper Object of his Worship? The old Heathen
Worshippers of the Sun must, however, be ab-
solved. For they took it, not only for a God, but
the true and high God. And a poor blind Hea-
then might mistake that Luminary, so glorious

in itself, diffusing so many kindly Influences, and scattering so many Blessings, through the World, for the supreme God, much more excusably, than a Christian, under the glorious Light of the Gospel, can mistake a Crum of Bread for our Saviour's glorified Body in Heaven; especially, if you also take in the vast Heap of Absurdities, and downright Contradictions to Common-Sense, clogging the Supposition of the one's being, in every Consecration, converted into the other.

Thus much for the Idolatry of the Church of Rome in the Adoration of the Host. Her Idolatry in praying to Saints and Angels is another Head of the Indictment. The general Fact, that she does pray to them, is not denied. But the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness, the Idolatry or the No-Idolatry, of the Practice, is the Thing in Question. And the Roman Catholics, to convince you, that in their Practice of praying to them there can be no Idolatry, are wont to plead the Manner of their doing it, confidently asserting, that it is nothing more than an *Ora pro nobis*, or a Request that they would pray to God *with* them, and *for* them, that *he* would give them the Things they stand in need of; which they think they may do as lawfully, as a sick Man can desire the Prayers of a Congregation, or one Friend ask another here on Earth to remember him in his Prayers, and intercede with God for him. But, in the first Place, this Pretence, that they only pray to them *that they would pray for us*, is absolutely false; and they would not dare to insist upon it, but that they believe few of those they have a

Design

Design upon, or converse with, know enough of their Prayers to contradict, or have their Books of Devotion near enough at hand, from whence to confute it. But they should have, methinks, a little Reverence for the Learned, who, perhaps, possess, or can easily procure, and are able to read, their *Rosaries, Hours, Breviaries, Missals, and Pontificals*, and shew them the very Prayers which are addressed to the Saints, but, above all, to the Virgin *Mary*, entreating, not the Help and Assistance of her Prayers, but her *personal* Help and Assistance, and begging her, not to intercede with God, that it would please *him* to bestow, but to bestow, *herself*, both temporal and spiritual Blessings, regarding this Life, and that which is to come. I once had a Thought to set down here some of the Hymns and Prayers of this Sort; but, upon further Consideration, and chiefly for Brevity's sake, I content myself with setting down half a Dozen, or so, of the Petitions that are addressed to her.—*Make us, most excellent Virgin, meek and chaste.—Accept what we offer, give what we ask, pardon what we fear, because thou art the only Hope of Sinners.—Loose the Bonds of the Guilty,—give Sight to the Blind,—drive away our Evils,—strengthen the Weak,—comfort the Mourners.—O Mary, Mother of Grace, sweet Parent of Mercy, protect us from the Enemy, and receive us in the Hour of Death.* This is the Way they pray to her, just as they do to the living God. Not but they do pray to her, *sometimes*, in the Way they pretend to do, beseeching her to be their Advocate, and intercede with God, or, *in the Right of a Mother*, to

command her Son [p] to do this, and that, for them. They pray to her both Ways, and one Way, perhaps, as often as the other. Therefore, they illude and impose upon us, presuming upon our Ignorance or Credulity, when they bear us in hand, that they pray no otherwise to Saint or Angel, than that they would undertake our Cause, become joint Petitioners to God *with* us, and pray to him *for* us.

They do indeed (to bring themselves off) pretend, that all their Prayers to Angels, Saints, or the Virgin Mother, which seem to be irrelative, or ultimate, and to terminate in *them*, should be *reduced* to an *Ora pro nobis*. They should be, to be sure; and, indeed, to something still lower. But whom is this to be done by? Should it not be by the

[p] Our Lord, at the Marriage in *Cana of Galilee*, when he entered upon his Ministry, and did his first Miracle, plainly intimated to his blessed Mother, that she must not affect to influence and direct him in the working of his Miracles, or in the Execution of any other Part of his Commission, and Ministry. For this seems to be the Import of those Words of his, *τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί;* What have I to do with thee? As much as to say, "Thou must not interfere in these Matters: I must take upon me to act independently on Thee, as to the *Kind* of Miracles I am to work, and the *Time* of doing them, and in all other Things which *simply* concern the Ministry, which the Father has given me to fulfill." And yet (strange!) he who would not allow her to interfere and direct *him* in his Father's Business here on Earth, is set forth, in the Devotions of the *Roman Church*, as subject to her, now he is exalted to his Kingdom in Heaven. Thus, in the Hymn beginning with *Ave Maris Stella*, they address her in these Words, *Monstra te esse Matrem*, Shew that thou art his Mother. Also, in the Office which is call'd *The Crown of the blessed Virgin*, they speak to her thus,—*Jure Matris, impera tuo dilectissimo Filio*, By the Right and Authority of a Mother, command thy most beloved Son, that he would, &c. Intolerable Presumption! What a prodigious Height is the Indiscretion and Impiety of her Worshipers, in that Church, come to!

Church?

Church? Why then does not the Church do it? Why does she not alter those Forms, and make her Children address themselves to the Saints and Angels (if they *must* pray to them) only as *Advocates* and *Intercessors* for such Things as they stand in need of and desire, and not as the real *Donors* of them? As the Forms of the Church stand at present, they are, many of them, as Archbishop Bramball has observed [q], as improperly and absurdly used by a Man who means no more by them than that the Saints would help him to the good Things he prays to them for, *only* by their Prayers, “ as if
 “ a Suppliant, intending only to move an ordinary
 “ Courtier to mediate for him to the King, should fall
 “ down upon his Knees before that Courtier, beseech
 “ him to make him an Earl, or a Knight, or to bestow
 “ such an Office, or such a Pardon, upon him, or to do
 “ some other Grace for him, properly belonging to the
 “ Prerogative Royal.” But to expect that the People, especially without any Direction from the Church, (for she has given them none, that I know of) should ever think of making, in their interior Sentiments, such a *Reduction* in the Prayers of the Church, as our expounding Divines talk of, is quite foolish and unreasonable. The People will always understand their Prayers (and why should they not?) according to the plain, natural, simple, obvious Meaning of the Words; and, if Prayers to the blessed Virgin are put into their Hands, plainly importing that she would give them Grace, and bring them to Salvation, they will never, of themselves, entertain

[q] Answer to Mons. De La Miliere, p. 66.

a Thought, that the Meaning of such Prayers is only to beg of her, that *she* would ask God that *he* would be pleased to give them *Grace* and *Salvation*, but will ask her, downright, to do it for them, herself, will consider her as the Giver and Dispenser of those Benefits, and not think it needful to apply to, and depend, for them, upon any other. And that their Way of praying to the Saints has actually this Effect, has been the Complaint of some of their own Communion. *There are some, they tell us, and no bad Men neither, who seem to have more Trust in this, or i' other Saint, whom they have chosen for their Patron, than they have in God, and their Saviour.* And any one may perceive this is true, who observes the Devotion with which they run to the Shrines of such Saints, and the rich Offerings they make there, while the Altars of God are coldly approach'd, or almost desolate and forsaken.

It may be further proper to observe, to what Lengths this happy Device of *reducing* one thing to another, in spite of all the Resistance and Reluctancy of Words, is capable of being carried, and what mighty Feats may be done by it. An *Ora pro nobis* may be as rationally reduced to the other Sort of Prayer, as the other Sort to an *Ora pro nobis*. In fine, any thing may be *reduced* to almost any thing. A *local* and *corporal* Presence (for Example) of *Jesus Christ* in the Sacrament of the Altar may be *reduced* to a spiritual one. And, if there be any Sense in saying, as the Bishop of *Meaux* does, “*That, in*
“*what Terms soever those Prayers, which we address*
“*to the Saints, are couched, the Intention of the*
“*Church, and of her Faithful, reduces them always*

“ to this Form, PRAY FOR US,” there would be as much Sense in his saying, that, *in what Terms soever the Doctrine of the Eucharist is couched, in the Council of Lateran, or Pope Pius’s Creed, or any other Profession and Declaration of the Roman Faith, the Intention of the Church, and of her Faithful, always reduces it to that real, but spiritual, Presence, which has been admitted by Protestants.* This Way the Roman Church may get clear of the Monster *Transubstantiation*, whenever she pleases. At one Time or other, she may come to be ashamed of it, as many of *her Faithful*, I dare say, are already : Or, she may find it such a *Mill-stone about her Neck, as will be likely to sink her.* And if, upon either of these Accounts, she shall have a Mind to be rid of it, I am apt to think she will not readily light upon a neater and cleverer Way for it, than that we have now presumed to hint to her.

But let us return : We have shewn, I conceive, very plainly, that those of the Church of *Rome*, when they tell us, they implore no Grace or Assistance of the Saints, other than that of their Prayers for us, do not speak the Truth, but go about to deceive us. And, now, we will shew, that, supposing it were true, it would not excuse them ; for that *such Invocation of the Saints as, they own, they do practise, is really idolatrous, tho’ not quite so foully and grossly idolatrous, as the other ;* and that their comparing it with one Friend’s asking another to remember him in his Prayers, or a sick Person’s desiring the Prayers of a Christian Congregation, is but a childish and pitiful Defence of it. We would have them to know, it is not their simply wishing, or desiring

desiring to have the Prayers of a Saint or Angel, that offends us, or which we call *Idolatry*. No; it is their *Manner* of seeking for them. Could I ascend to Heaven, and converse there, with the *blessed Virgin*, *St. Peter*, or *St. Paul*, or any other Saint, or would one of these condescend to come down to Earth, and to converse with me, as, the *Legends* tell us, they often did with some of the *Romish* Saints, Face to Face, I should have, I believe, no more Scruple to request his Prayers and Intercession for me at the Throne of Grace, (supposing Prayer to be the Way wherein they in Heaven exercise and express their Charity to us here on Earth) than I would to ask a Neighbour, or a Friend, or Congregation of Christians, to pray for me, in case I was visited with Sicknes, or under Affliction and Desolation of any other Kind. But he must be blind who cannot see this is a different thing from *formally* and *solemnly invoking* them, after the Manner prescribed and practised by the *Roman Church*, which, in short, is no other, than the Manner wherein they *call upon* God himself. Do we ever request our Friends, or the Church-Assembly, in the *mental* Way, to pray for us, as is often done to the Saints and Angels in the Church of *Rome*? If it were known we do any such thing, should not we be thought distracted? Or, when we do it *vacally*, do we do it with such *solemn, religious* Circumstances, as *Roman Catholicks* call upon their Saints with? Do we repair to our Churches, to ask our Friends, *there*, to do this charitable Office for us? And, when we are there, do we fall down upon our Knees, and prostrate ourselves to them? Or, is our Request

Request ever accompanied with lighting up Candles, and burning Incense before them, as the Prayers of *Roman Catholicks* to the Saints are wont to be, with Candles blazing, and Incense smoking, before the Images of those they address them to? Or, do we ask that Favour of them, when absent from us? Do we in *Great-Britain* speak to our Friends who are (suppose) in *China*, across the vast Tracts of *Europe* and *Asia*, or to those in *Mexico* or *Peru*, across the great *Western Ocean*, to pray for us, as the *Papists* do to the Saints who are in Heaven, a thousand times, 'tis like, further from us, than our Friends can be in those, or in any Part of this Earth? When we shall think proper to *invoke* our Friends to pray for us, in the same Manner, and with the same Circumstances, they *invoke* and call upon the Saints to pray for them, or when they *speak* to the Saints in no other than that *easy, familiar Way* we speak to our Friends to *pray for us*, there will be some Sense in making the Cases parallel, and justifying the one by the other.

But, as to the Case, considered absolutely, and in itself, nothing, in my Opinion, can be plainer, than that their praying to Saints and Angels, in the Manner they do, is a *religious Cult*, or Worship, ascribing to them a kind of Immensity, and some other Attributes belonging to God only. *Mental Prayer* to Saints or Angels supposes them to know the Hearts of Men, the most secret Desires and Aspirations of them; which, nevertheless, the Scripture, in divers Places, particularly, 1 *Kings* viii. 39. *Jer.* xi. 20. and xvii. 10. *Rev.* ii. 23. represents as the special Prerogative of God. And praying to
them

them *vocally*, especially to such of them as have great Numbers of Votaries, and particularly to the Virgin *Mary*, who has most of all, and doing this both publickly and privately, in every Country, and in every Place and Corner of it, is plainly an Acknowledgment of their being every where present, and knowing every thing that is done upon the Face of the whole Earth. The Number of her Votaries and Slaves is, we know, almost infinite; and, if we consider, that one Instance of the Servitude, to which they have addicted themselves towards her, is the performing, *daily*, some Devotions, containing her Excellencies and Praises, and imploring her Assistance and Mediation, we cannot, I think, suppose less, than that there are, in one Part or other of the Globe, some hundreds of thousands praying to her at the same Instant. Does she hear them all, and every one of them, distinctly and separately? If she does not, I am sure her Worship is a foolish and irrational Service. If she does, how came she, for the Lord's sake, to such a wonderful and immense Knowledge? Tho' some of them have been extravagant enough to call her a *Goddeſs*, and intimated, that, *as ſhe has communicated Humanity to Chriſt, ſo he has communicated his Deity to her*, ſhe is but a Creature; ſhe is but a Woman. And, if ſhe, with the reſt of the Saints, are yet (which I think more than probable) in the *Paradiſical* only, and not in the *heavenly* State, there is no room to ſuppoſe ſhe has received ſuch an Increate of Knowledge, as this requires, or any thing like it. Or, if, with the *Romaniſts*, we ſuppoſe her to be already in the *heavenly* State, and poſſeſſed of all the Felicity

Felicity she will ever have, her Faculties (consequently) elevated incomparably beyond what they were in this mortal Life, yet 'tis unreasonable to suppose any human Mind can be enlarged and extended to such a Degree, as to be capable of comprehending, and that at *once*, all the Concerns of every Man and Woman living, and every thing that passes upon this Earth, that has any Connexion with them. The *Romanists* indeed (I think) do not pretend to maintain that she knows all our Necessities and Desires, by the Strength, or Reach of her own Faculties. But they have two or three Conjectures concerning the Way she comes to know them, that are ridiculous enough. *Perhaps*, (say they) *she knows them by the Ministry and Communication of Angels*. A likely Thing truly, that an Angel should be station'd, and, every Moment, going and coming betwixt her and each of her Votaries, some hundreds of thousands in the whole, and a proportionable Number between every other of the Saints and Saintesses, and *their* Supplicants; as if it was their Office to *stand continually before* the Saints, and to *behold their Faces*, rather than *before God*, and *behold his Face*, expecting *their*, rather than *his* Commands, and ready to do *their* Will, not *his*; or, as if, in *ministring to those who shall be Heirs of Salvation*, there was no other Function or Employment they had to discharge, but carrying their Prayers to their Patrons or Patronesses in Heaven. Or, *perchance*, (they suggest) *God himself makes known to them our Desires by a particular Revelation*. As much as to say, when I am praying to—*St. Apollonia*, we'll say, for Example,—that she would pray

to God to ease me of the Tooth-ach, (which, be-like, is her proper Province) she indeed is too far off to hear either my Prayers or Moans, and knows not what ails me, or any thing of the Matter: But God, who is present, hears me, and gives her to understand, that such a Person, living in such a Place, is now praying to *her*, that *she* would pray to *him* to remove his Tooth-ach; upon which Information received from God, she immediately betakes herself to intercede with *him* for me; and my Tooth-ach, *perhaps*, ceases. But, lest this should be thought a ridiculous and preposterous Procedure, they have thought of a neater Way for the Saints in Heaven to get to a Knowledge of our Prayers, and that is, *by looking into, and contemplating the divine Essence, where all Truth is comprised.* For this, it seems, the Saints are allowed, and enabled to do. And, if they will only cast an Eye upon this *Looking-glass of the Trinity*, as the *Schoolmen* call it, they may plainly perceive, *there*, all our Prayers to them, and will stand in no need of receiving from God any *particular* Information concerning them. 'Tis a pretty Conceit; only 'tis burthen'd with this small Inconvenience, that, if the Saints cannot see all Things in God, we cannot be sure that our Prayers are to be seen there; and, if they *do* see all Things in him, they will be as omniscient as he; and the Angels, who, we may reasonably suppose, can see as much, as the Saints, in this *Looking-glass*, would know the Day of Judgment, which our Saviour assures us they do not.

One Thing more I have yet to remark, before I dismiss this Subject, That the Worship of Angels,
and

and of Saints, or of Men and Women departed this Life, tho' I have treated them hitherto alike, and without distinguishing, are, nevertheless, Matters, in some Respects, of different Consideration. Both are indeed *Idolatry*; but the Worship of the Saints much more dangerous than the other. In the Worship of Angels, Men have, at least, the Satisfaction to be assured, that their Worship is paid to pure and holy Spirits, who dwell continually in God's Presence. But they cannot be sure of *that*, when they worship reputed Saints; no, tho' they be canonized. The Pope, indeed, has judged them already, according to his Judgment, pronounced them to be Saints, and bid them go into eternal Life. But he is not constituted, that I know of, nor do I believe, that, with his Infallibility, and other Privileges, he is qualified to be the Judge of Quick and Dead. In this Matter, at least, his Judgment is not infallible. And you will not doubt of this, when you examine the Lives of some who shine in the *Roman Calendar*, who, *when living*, were none of the best of Men, and of whom it may justly, and without Breach of Charity, be feared, that their Condition, *now*, is not so happy and glorious, as the deluded Members of that Church suppose it to be. To speak out, and in plainer Terms; if Rebels, Traitors, and Cut-throats go to Hell, 'tis too probable that some of the *Romish* Saints are there. And, if this be the Case, how fearful is the Hazard which the Members of the Church of *Rome* must run, when they offer up their Prayers to all, without Discrimination, which she directs them to pray to! Some of these may be in Heaven, others may not. And, while
1 you

you are praying to *these*, you may be saying your Prayers, for any thing you know, to one of the damned Spirits. And so you will be guilty, not only of *Idolatry*, but *Idolatry* of the deepest Dye, *Idolatry* next to that of worshipping the Devil.

I hope, I have said enough to make good the Charge which has been advanced against the Church of *Rome*. I am certain, however, it has been done so effectually by the learned Bishop *Stillingfleet*, and many others, both at home and abroad, that she has now no Resource, but (instead of complaining of the Harshness and Cruelty of charging her with *Idolatry*) setting some of her hardiest Genius's, or cunningest Sophisters, at Work, to prove the Innocency of it, and to shew, it is no such Bug-bear, as it is commonly accounted, nor need fright any one away, or keep him off, from her Communion.

S E C T. V.

Shewing that a Protestant shall not need to be moved by the Charge of Schism, which Roman Catholicks bring against us, for throwing off our Subjection to the Pope, and withdrawing ourselves from the Worship of their Church. The Charge retorted upon themselves.

I Am not going about here to make a Mock of Schism, or to represent it as a Matter which Christians shall not need to give themselves any Concern about: For I see, very plainly, it is the Will of our Lord and Master, that all who believe on him,

him, if it be possible, and as much as lieth in them, should be united together, not only in Charity and Affection, but also in external Worship and Communion; and that the common Edification of the Church, and the Glory of God, require that they should be so; and, consequently, that it must be an Offence of the blackest Kind to divide, and form themselves into distinct and separate Communions. But, at the same time, it must be confessed, that, in some Circumstances, it is not only warrantable, but necessary, to do so; and that any Church, or Society of Christians, even that to which we were otherwise immediately and rightfully subject, may, and ought, to be avoided, and utterly forsaken, if it makes in the Faith such Innovations, and binds upon her Members such Corruptions, as subvert and ruin Christianity, and imposes upon them such Obligations, as they cannot, without committing grievous Sin, and wounding their Consciences, submit to.

But it is too plain, that *Roman Catholics*, in general, are embued with Sentiments very different from these, and have such high Notions of the Heinousness of any Separation from their Church, as to allow *nothing* to be a sufficient Justification of it. Surely it must be so, when we see such a Man as Father *Le Courayer* [r], one who has shewn himself so diligent an Enquirer after Truth, and so courageous for it, making no Difficulty to say, “*nothing can excuse Schism*,” and quoting St. *Austin*, as

[r] Preface to his Defence of the Validity of the *English* Ordinations, p. 4.

saying, “ *there never is a just Reason to break Union.*”

If that worthy Gentleman were to condescend to explain himself, and should think fit to tell us, that he spake only in the *popular* Way, and meant no more than that Separation from the Church, to which we are subject, should not be lightly, and without great Cause, ventured upon, we should gladly embrace his Exposition, and heartily join with him in maintaining the Truth of the Assertion. But, if he meant to speak *strictly, theologically, and dogmatically*, and to signify that no Errors can be so enormous, or Corruptions so great, but that we should rather bear with them, admit, embrace, profess, and practise them, every one of them, than withdraw from the Communion, and forsake the Unity of the Church, we conceive he is mistaken, and persuade ourselves he would soon see and retract his Mistake, if he would reconsider this Point with the same Care and Attention, Disinterest and Impartiality, with which he has examined one other. And, if the ancient Fathers do say (as, to be sure, they do) very severe Things concerning the Danger of separating from the Church, and if St. *Austin*, in particular, does say what this Gentleman quotes from him, they commonly speak, I apprehend, with regard to particular Cases, which they had then in View, but, to be sure, with regard to the State of the Church in their own Times, which, 'tis certain, was then such, that *there could be no Reason for breaking the Unity thereof*. But, had St. *Austin*, and those other Fathers, who speak *so* against Schism, lived in the later Ages of the Church, and, especially, since the Council of *Trent*, and the framing of Pope *Pius's* Creed, where-

by an innumerable Multitude of Superstitions and Innovations in the Worship of the Church, and the most horrid Errors in the Faith of it, have been introduced, and bound upon the People by a Law, as necessary Terms of Communion with it, they would certainly have alter'd their Language: They would have spoken of a Separation from any Church in the World, that should admit and impose such Corruptions, in another Tone, and thought it as necessary to separate themselves from it, as they did to separate from the Communion of the *Arians*, when they were uppermost, and had a Bishop, or two, of *Rome* with them [s], and carried all before them. I dare say, they would have avow'd what we have done, or done as we did, at the Reformation.

The learned and worthy Person just before mention'd is pleased to speak of "*their Abuses and Vices, as what cannot justify, tho' indeed they may palliate, our Schism, (as he calls it) in the Eyes of the Simple.*" But we beseech him to call to Mind, that the Defence and Justification of our Separation is never put upon any *Abuses*, that may have crept into their Church, contrary to the Doctrines she receives, but always upon the Doctrines themselves, her professed and authorized Doctrines, or her approved and indispensable Practices. And, as to their *Vices*, we never mention them, to the *Simple*, or others, unless when it is necessary, and we are forced to do it, in our own Vindication. For we think their *Vices* have nothing to do in the Controversy

[s] *Liberius and Felix.*

betwixt us : And, as the Separation was not made, at first, upon Account of *them*, so we should be ashamed to maintain, and persist in it, if there was nothing but *these*, tho' they were much greater than they are, that obliged us to it. Without either their *Vices* or *Abuses*, we have lawful and sufficient Matter for Separation. If it be lawful to throw off the Tyranny and Usurpation of a Bishop, who claims an universal Pastorship, a Supremacy of Jurisdiction over all the Bishops, Priests, and Faithful in the World, of whom, nevertheless, we read nothing in the Word of God, and who, for some Ages, was little more regarded in the Church, than other Bishops : If it be lawful for the Christian Laity to withdraw from a Church which strives to keep them in Ignorance, and will not let them enjoy the free Use of the holy Scriptures, which are their Birth-right, or the Service of the Church, in a Language which they understand, and sacrilegiously deprives them of an essential Part of the holy Sacrament of the *Eucharist*, which is the Food of their Souls, whereby they are nourished and preserved to everlasting Life : If it be lawful to withdraw from any Church, upon Account of false and impure Doctrines, and obliging the People to make Profession of them, or even for Heresies ; (for surely *Transubstantiation*, and some other Doctrines maintain'd by the Church of *Rome*, favour much more of *Heresy*, than any of our Doctrines and Opinions do) : Or, if it be lawful, upon Account of the most abominable Idolatries, practised and imposed by it—If, I say, it be lawful to depart from any Church upon either of these Accounts, or all of them together, then

then our Departure and Separation from the Church of *Rome* must be esteem'd lawful. In Reality, the Idolatry alone of that Church, if there was nothing else to find Fault with in it, is a sufficient Reason for Separation. This we are plainly taught by two of the Apostles. *What Agreement* (says St. Paul, 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17.) *hath the Temple of God with Idols?—Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean Thing, and I will receive you.* In another Place, (1 Cor. x. 14.) he says, *My dearly beloved, flee from Idolatry.* And St. John says, 1 John v. 21. *Little Children, keep yourselves from Idols.* But which Way, I pray, would it have been possible for us *to flee from Idolatry*, and to *keep ourselves from Idols*, unless it were by *fleeing*, and *keeping off* from a Church, which authorizes and imposes upon all the Faithful, in Communion with her, the daily Practice and Use of them?

And here the Matter might have been properly and safely rested. But, being willing to give abundant Satisfaction in a Point which we are used to be vehemently urged with, I shall lay before you two or three other Considerations of no small Moment in this Controversy, the more effectually to expose the groundless Reproach, and empty Accusation of a *schismatical* Separation, which they tax us with.

If the Charge of *Schism*, which they bring against us, shall be grounded upon our withdrawing ourselves from under the Obedience of the *Pope*, they may be told, that the *Pope* had no lawful Jurisdiction over the *British* Church, and that there can be no

Schism, no formal and criminal *Schism*, in shaking off an Authority, which was unjustly, without any colourable Pretence of Right, imposed upon us. That he had no Authority in *Britain*, for the first six hundred Years, is plain from the Reception which *Austin* met with from the *British* Clergy, about the Close of the sixth Century. That Monk, being sent hither by *Gregory the Great*, for the Conversion of *Ethelbert*, and the *Anglo-Saxons*, took upon him to demand the Submission of the *British* Christians to the Bishop of *Rome*, as their *Patriarch*, and to himself, as their *Archbishop*. But these, one and all, rejected the Proposition, as new and strange, with Indignation, giving him plainly to understand, that “ *they knew of no Duty or Obedience due to* “ the Person whom he call’d the *Pope*, besides the “ *Duty of Love*, which they ow’d to all Christians; “ and that the *British* Bishops were govern’d, under “ *God*, by no other, but the Bishop of *Caerleon* upon *Uske*.” This shews that the Bishops of *Rome* had no Authority in this Island before that Time: And, having hitherto had none, they stood absolutely excluded from, and were rendered incapable of, ever having any, by the eighth *Canon* of the General Council of *Ephesus*, whereby it was decreed, “ *that no* “ *Bishop assume any other Province, that is not, or* “ *was not formerly, and from the Beginning, subject* “ *to him, or to those who were his Predecessors; but, if* “ *any one have assumed, or reduced under his Power,* “ *any such Church, that he be forced to restore it*”— “ *that so the Rights of every Province, formerly, and* “ *from the Beginning, belonging to it, may be pre-* “ *served clear and inviolable.*” This *Canon* firmly establishes

establishesthe the Exemption of the *British* Churches from the Jurisdiction of the Bishop of *Rome*. For, having no Jurisdiction here at the Time the *Canon* was made, (nor indeed for a long Time after) he was thereby disabled from ever acquiring any over us. But, this notwithstanding, the Bishops of *Rome* did, by Degrees, get Footing in these Churches, and, in Process of Time, subdued them to their Obedience, and, for some Centuries, exercised over them a Tyranny that was quite insupportable. But being, all the while, an Encroachment upon the original Liberty of our Churches, it was lawful to throw it off, and to resume our antient Independency, whenever we should find it safe and practicable.

They do, indeed, pretend to advance, that our long and quiet *Submission* to the Authority of the *Roman* See had given her the Right of Prescription, and so established her Authority, that, tho' originally none, she could not be afterwards lawfully opposed, and dispossessed of it. Too long, indeed, we did submit to it. But it cannot be said, our Submission was *quiet* and *resign'd*. For our Kings, and Parliaments, and Synods, were continually struggling and contending with it. But, had it been *quieter* than it was, no Right could have accrued from it. The *Ephesine Canon*, before recited, cuts off any such Pretence. For it determines, as you heard before, that, *if any Bishop has assumed, or reduced under his Power, any Church, that was not formerly, and from the Beginning, subject to him, he shall be forced to restore it.* This Canon chases the Pope out of *England*: And what more did we do than put it in Execution,

ecution, (which, sure, is no schismatical Act) when we threw off the Papal Yoke, at the Reformation?

But they go on, and insist, that, if the Authority of the *Pope*, here in *England*, cannot be maintain'd upon the Right of *Possession* and *Prescription*, it may be, at least, upon the Foot of our *Conversion*. The Bishops of *Rome* (they say) *begat us in Christ*, and are our *spiritual Parents*, and have, therefore, a Right to guide and govern us. Were not we converted to Christianity by *Missionaries* sent from thence? Not the *Britons*, I hope; therefore *they* are free. And, as to the Conversion of our *Saxon* Ancestors, *France* puts in for the Honour of it. And it does plainly appear, that the Zeal and Piety of Queen *Bertha*, with the Assistance of the *Frenchmen* that came over with her, had made great Impressions upon the Minds both of *Ethelbert*, and his People, in Favour of Christianity, and raised in them strong Dispositions to embrace it, before *Austin* came hither. But let *Gregory*, let *Austin*, and his Companions, have their due. They were great Instruments, no Doubt, in bringing *Part* of our Island (for 'tis fit the *Roman Catholics* should know, that *the greater Part* of it was converted by others) to the Knowledge and Profession of Christianity [t]. And

[t] *Austin* and his Companions were the first that preached the Gospel to the *Anglo-Saxons*. However, the Honour of their Conversion ought not to be ascribed to them alone. The *Scotch* Monks of *St. Columba* had at least as great a Share in it, as the *Italians*. For, after these last had begun to make *Converts*, the new Christians being sunk again into Idolatry, the *Scotch* Monks were the Persons that set them right, or, rather, converted them

anew.

And such as ow'd their Conversion to *them* did well to hearken, and be obedient, and submit themselves to them, as to their *Fathers in God*, during their Infancy and Non-age. But, sure, there is a Time when the Children become free. When they are grown up, have Families of their own, are in a Condition as flourishing as their Parents, and want nothing from them, tho' they are still bound to render them Affection, Esteem, and Honour, as the Instruments whom God made use of to give them Life, and, on all Occasions, to acknowledge the Care they have taken in their Education, yet the Duty of *absolute Submission*, and *implicit Conformity* to their Will, and *obeying them in all Things*, is at an End, and ceases. The Bonds of Subjection are then broken: They are no longer under their Parents Jurisdiction, and, with respect to Liberty, are equal

anew. This was the Case in the Kingdoms of *Essex*, *Northumberland*, and *East-Anglia*. As for the Conversion of the *Mercians*, the *Italian* Missionaries had no Hand in it at all. *Rapin's History of England*, p. 79. — Presently after he observes, “ that the Converts made by these *Italian* Monks were not, 'tis to be feared, well grounded in their Religion”. This is a natural Inference from the Apostasy of the People of *Essex*, *East-Anglia*, *Northumberland*, and *Kent* itself, at a Time when, had they been true Christians, they would have given Marks of their *highest Zeal*. This makes one think, their *Conversion* was without any *previous* Instruction, and rather the Effect of Fear, or Complaisance to their Kings, than of a thorough Persuasion and Knowledge of the Truth. It is therefore surprizingly strange, that the Conversion of the *English* should be ascribed to *Ausfin*, rather than to *Aidan*, to *Finan*, to *Colman*, to *Cedd*, to *Diuna*, and the other *Scotch* Monks, who, undoubtedly, laboured much more abundantly than he. But here lies the Case: These last had not their *Orders* from *Rome*, and therefore must not be allow'd any Share in this Work.

to them. And I hope, in nine hundred Years, and more, the *English* Church was so well grown up, and in such a Condition of subsisting alone, that she might justly demand her Liberty, and to be left Mistress of herself. Suppose the Gospel should spread at *Madras*, and *Cudulore*, in the *East-Indies*, where we have now *Missions*, and all the Inhabitants of the Country about, to an Extent of Ground equal to that of the *British* Islands, should be brought to the Obedience of Christ; a Church, in due Time, formed and organized, enriched with liberal Revenues, adorned with many Immunities and Honours, protected by the *secular Powers*, govern'd by *Bishops* in their respective Districts, with *Primates* and *Metropolitans* at the Head of them, and every way as famous and flourishing, as our own. And if, in this Case, it would be thought ridiculous for the Church of *England*, or her *Metropolitan*, to claim a Supremacy of Jurisdiction over that Church, to the End of the World, under the Pretext of its Foundations being laid by certain *English* Missionaries, who, amongst others, were employed and assisting in that Work, it must be equally ridiculous for the Church of *Rome* to claim the like Supremacy, now and for ever, over the *English* Church, because certain Monks from *Rome* were greatly instrumental in planting the Gospel in the Kingdom of *Kent*, and a few other Places, some eleven or twelve hundred Years ago. Or, (to come nearer yet to the Church of *Rome*) if it be reasonable and just, the Church of *England* should be always subject to *her*, because she received, in Part, her Christianity from thence, it must be equally, or more reasonable and just, that the Church
of

of *Rome* should subject herself to the Church of *Jerusalem*, because she *entirely* derived from that Church *her Christianity*. And, when the Church of *Rome* shews, that she ever did, and declares herself bound, and willing, to put *her* Neck again under the Yoke of the Church of *Jerusalem*, (if such a Church should ever rise again in the World) I dare say, we may safely promise, we will put *our* Necks under *her* Yoke.

You see, now, that, how reasonable and equitable soever it might be for our first *Saxon* Ancestors to be obedient, during their infant and helpless State, to those who converted them, the Case was altered long before the Reformation; and there was no Reason, that our Forefathers, *then*, or that we, *now*, and at all Times to come, should be so. But the Case was altered another Way. When the *English* Church was in her Infancy, her spiritual Parent fed her with Food that was pretty wholesome, and tolerably convenient for her, and otherwise treated her with sufficient Kindness and Indulgence. But, as she grew up, the Temper, Sentiments, and Behaviour of this same Mother, towards her, were strangely alter'd. She mixed Abundance of Poison with her Food: She let her have scarce any without a Dose of it, and treated her, in every Respect, with all the Rigour and Severity imaginable. In short, she became a true Step-mother, a perfect Tyrant to her. And then it was high Time to assert the Liberty she was, *otherwise*, entitled to, and to rescue herself from that slavish Subjection, and cruel Treatment, which was almost inconsistent with her Life. — Thus much in Vindication of our casting off the Authority
of

of the *Pope*, and the *Schism* we are charged with, upon that Account.

But, if the pretended *Schism* shall be put upon our forsaking and turning our Backs upon the Worship of the *Roman Church*, it will be sufficient to answer, that the Worship of that Church was so corrupt and polluted, clogg'd and loaded with such Terms of Communion, as it was absolutely unlawful for any Christian to submit to. And, in such a Case, the *Schism* must be charged upon those who impose such a Worship, and such Terms of Communion, not those who refuse (as they ought to do) to submit it to them. But they may further be answered, that the national Church of *England* had, as every national Church has, a Power and Right, *in itself*, to reform itself, to throw out of its Worship all Things that offend, and to purge it of whatever Corruptions may have been introduced, or crept into it, and, consequently, that it is the Duty of all the Members of that Church to acquiesce in, and conform themselves to, such Regulations. And this the *Roman Catholics*, here in *England*, (it is well known) did do, for the first ten Years of Queen *Elizabeth*. All that Time, they frequented our Churches, as others did, and, in all Probability, would have done so to this Day, and *been altogether such as we are*, if the *Pope*, by his Influence and Authority, had not drawn them away from us. Who, then, are the Schismatics, let any reasonable and impartial Man judge; *We*, who only reformed, as we had Right and Authority to do, the publick Service, and cleared it of the Corruptions it was defiled with, yet with so much Discretion and Moderation, as that they both *could*, and *did*,

did, for many Years, comply with it; or *They*, who, at last, forsook, and turn'd their Backs on it, in Obedience to one, whom I have shewn before never to have had any lawful Authority in this Nation, and to be justly and *canonically* cast out from among us; whom, therefore, they were under no Obligation to regard, and hearken to.

I said before, that the Church of *England*, and every national Church, has a Right to reform itself, whether other Churches will, or will not, join with it; and, consequently, that those of her Members, who fall in, and comply, with her Faith and Worship, so reformed, are not the *Schismatics*, but those who refuse to do it. But this Consequence will be yet stronger, when a Number of national Churches, all sensible of grievous Corruptions in their Faith and Worship, which there is a Necessity to reform, shall agree together to reform them. The Members of those Churches will be, then, still less liable to any Charge, or Imputation of *Schism*, and those who oppose, or stand out against such a necessary Reformation, will be more plainly and undeniably involved in it. Nor is this said at random, or a mere *Protestant* Notion, which we have started, to serve the Cause of the Reformation; but is asserted by *Roman Catholics* themselves. Hear what *Du Pin*, one of their own Communion, says, upon the Matter: “ *If (says that learned Frenchman) all*
“ *the Churches in the World should be divided among*
“ *themselves, and a great Number of Churches be on*
“ *each Side, this, to be sure, would be a most deplorable Thing; and, if they were divided about Points of*
“ *Faith, our Duty would be to adhere to Antiquity,*

“ and to hold that for the true Church, wherein the
 “ antient Doctrine is retained.” [u] He makes a great deal of Difference between a few private Men, dissenting from the whole Church, about Matters of Ceremony, Order, and Discipline, or other Things of lesser Moment, and a Number of Churches, dividing and separating from each other, about important Doctrines, and Articles of Faith. An Handful of Men refusing to conform to the Church, upon a Point of Discipline, or a few Things of that Kind, tho’ they had some Reason on their Side, would be, in his Judgment, justly accounted *Schismaticks*, because Unity is not to be broken for the sake of a few Men, and of such trivial Matters. Therefore he observes, the *Novatians* were, with good Reason, esteemed *Schismaticks*, because they were few in Number, compared with the *Catholicks*, and their Quarrel with the Church was only about a Point of Discipline, concerning Repentance, *they* standing up for the antient Severity thereof, while the *Catholicks* were disposed to be more indulgent, and to relax a little. But, where the Dispute and Separation is between a Number of Churches on each Side, about Points of Faith and Religion, the true Church (he thinks, and he thinks rightly) are those, whose Faith is pure and primitive, and those, whoever they are, who refuse and reject this pure and primitive Faith, are the *Schismaticks*. Let this, now, be applied to the Case in Controversy between *us* and the *Romanists*. All the World knows, one Half, or well nigh Half, of the Churches, formerly subject to the Bishops of *Rome*, are with *us*. They also know,

[u] De Antiq. Eccles. Discip. Dissert. III. c. 1.

we are not so much divided about Rites and Ceremonies, or Matters of Order and Discipline, as about Doctrines of Faith, and some Points of Worship, of no less Consequence than any Doctrine of Faith whatever. The true Church, therefore, according to him, are those, whether they or we, who hold the scriptural antient Faith, and adhere to the Purity of the Christian Worship. The *Schismatics* those, whose Faith is novel, and whose Worship is unholy, impious, and idolatrous. If, therefore, the Papal Supremacy and Infallibility, if Transubstantiation, the Adoration of the Host, Invocation of Saints and Angels, Purgatory, and Prayer to deliver Souls out of it, Indulgences, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Tradition a Rule of Faith of equal Authority with the Scriptures, the Lawfulness and Sufficiency of Half-communion, the seven Sacraments, neither more nor fewer—If these, I say, and twenty other Doctrines one might name, have really Scripture and true Antiquity on their Side, then the *Schism* must confessedly be ours. But, if all these are Innovations, as we have proved a hundred and a hundred Times, and some of themselves confess them to be, this learned Doctor has, in Effect, owned, the *Schism* is chargeable upon *them*, and the Guilt of it, how great soever it may be, lies at *their* Doors.

The Conclusion of this Treatise.

I Think, I have now examined, and fairly removed all the Prejudices which are wont to be urged against the *Protestant* Churches, and the Church of *England* in particular, as well as all those which can
be

be thought favourable to the Church of *Rome*; and have also suggested divers Considerations, which may justly raise a Prejudice against her, and reasonably cause a Suspicion, that she is very erroneous and corrupt, and that many of the *Romanists* themselves are conscious of her being so. I have, moreover, shewn, that her Communion, by reason of the false Doctrines, and abominable Idolatries, she upholds, and obliges her Members to profess and practise, is absolutely sinful, and cannot be embraced, or continued in, without manifest Hazard of Salvation. And, upon the whole, I am willing to persuade myself, that, tho' more might be, and has been said, and better said, by others, I have said enough to bring off from Popery any Papist, who is not a thorough Bigot, and resolved to continue in it at any Rate, and to keep any Protestant, who does not set himself to Sale, or is not *inflamed with a longing Desire, and under some unaccountable irresistible Impulse, to be a-Catholick, from ever embracing it.*

It must be owing, one would think, to some irresistible Inclination to Change, or such an *unaccountable longing Desire to be a Catholick*, as I just now spake of, that any Person of Rank and Understanding goes over to that Church. But it is evident to all, and especially to those who live in the Neighbourhoods of some great Families of that Religion, how Things are carried there, and that no small Part of of the Converts to *Popery* by them made, among the lower Sort of People, are either drawn by the Scent of a good Kitchen, or, as I before intimated, bought with a Price, into that corrupt and impure Church. For this, I have the Authority of an eminently
learned

learned Prelate [x], who does not use to utter any thing at random; besides that of others. “ *Has not* “ *Popery* (says his Lordship) *been daily getting ground* “ *of us, by the artful and UNREGARDED* “ *Insinuations of the Adversary; and by APPLI-* “ *CATIONS OF ANOTHER KIND,* “ *which do indeed but little Honour to the Converts,* “ *or the Converters? The Price, at which a Man may* “ *sell the Protestant Religion, is become almost a stated* “ *and well known Sum; and there are known Markets,* “ *in which a Man may sell the Faith wherein he was* “ *born and bred.”* Shame upon *those*, let them be ever so great, who go about to make *such* Conversions! And Shame also upon *these* who are *so* converted! They must be void of all Piety and Conscience, and God have Mercy upon them! Oh, that they were wise, that they would consider, how detestable a thing it is, and how fatal, without Repentance, it may prove to them, to *pollute themselves thus for Handfuls of Barley and Pieces of Bread*, and, like the profane *Esau*, *sell their Birth-right*, their Religion, and their Souls, for a Mess of Pottage! Oh, that *they had Ears to hear*, and would suffer to sink into their Hearts (for such insensible Creatures are not likely to be moved by any Words or Reasonings of mine) the Voice of their great Master, (*Matt. xvi. 26.*) *What is a Man profited, if he should gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? And what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?*

[x] The present Bp of London's Sermon preach'd at Salisbury on the Occasion of the late Rebellion, p. 15.

But to those whose only Desire is that they may be saved, for whose Use and Satisfaction chiefly these Papers were drawn up, I hope they will prove a sufficient *Preservative*. This only I will say to *them*, beyond what I have said already, that, if they continue stedfast in the *Protestant Religion* and Church of *England*, wherein they were baptised, and their Ancestors served God, if they submit to her Rules and Orders, frequent her Worship, partake worthily of her Sacraments, attentively hearken to those wholesome Doctrines she proposes, and those holy Instructions which are given them by her Pastors, and frame their whole Lives according to those Doctrines, and these Instructions, my Soul for theirs they will be safe: Safer than those in the *Roman Church* (tho' I believe those to be the safest) who, being born and bred in *Roman Catholick Countries*, *before* the Reformation, or *since*, in such Countries as *Spain* and *Italy*, were train'd up in Ignorance and Prejudice, had no Knowledge, and scarce ever heard of any other Way of Christian Religion besides their own, or, if they have heard of the Protestant Religion, never heard of it otherwise than under the hideous Ideas, the injurious and false Representations, wherein the Priests and Bigots of their Church were pleased to set it forth to them: Much safer than those, who, born and bred, like the other, in *Roman Catholick Countries*, but more enlightened, like that of *France*, and surrounded with Protestants on every Side, had great Opportunities of informing themselves what the Protestant Religion really is, but wilfully neglected them, and might have easily come to the

Light and Knowledge of the Truth, if they had not shut their Eyes against it: Safer still than those, who, living in the midst of Protestant Countries, like ours, are therein surrounded with so much Light, that they cannot be altogether, tho' they do shut their Eyes, insensible of it: But infinitely safer than those of *us*, who, having been educated from their Cradles in the Protestant Religion, and lived many Years in the Acknowledgment and Profession of the Truth, and had the several Corruptions of Popery set, on many Occasions, before their Eyes, in their true and genuine Light, have, nevertheless, either through Levity of Temper, and Love of Change, or an Indifferency about all Religions, or for some private Interest, and Conveniency, without Consultation and Advice, without taking in the Help of their spiritual Guides, and seeking all the Informations and Instructions they could readily procure, precipitated and thrown themselves headlong into it. I am sure these Sentiments are just and right. But, lest my Authority should not have Weight enough to make them sink into the Mind of the Reader, and take full Possession of it, I will give him a much greater, that of the Archbishops *Tillotson* and *Wake*. “ I have so much Charity (says the “ former, [y]) and I desire always to have it, as “ to hope, that a great many in the *Roman* Church, “ who have lived piously, and been almost inevitably detain'd in that Church by the Prejudice of

[y] Sermon on the Hazard of being saved in the Church of *Rome*.

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“ Education and an invincible Ignorance, will, up-
 “ on a general Repentance, find Mercy with God ;
 “ and, tho’ their *Works suffer Loss, and be burnt, yet*
 “ *they themselves may escape as out of the Fire.* But,
 “ as for those who had the Opportunities of com-
 “ ing to the Knowledge of the Truth, if they con-
 “ tinue in the Errors of that Church, or apostatize
 “ from the Truth, I think their Condition so far
 “ from being safe, that there must be extraordinary
 “ favourable Circumstances, in their Case, to give a
 “ Man Hopes of their Salvation.” And the latter
 [z] expresses himself much after the same Manner.
 “ I look upon such, (says he) who go off from
 “ the Communion of the Church of *England* to that
 “ of the Church of *Rome*, to be in a more dangerous
 “ Estate, than those who were from the Beginning
 “ bred up in the *Roman* Communion ; forasmuch
 “ as they have both rejected the Truth once known
 “ and received by them, and cast off the Way in
 “ which the Providence of God had placed them,
 “ and that, it may be, on some base Grounds ; to
 “ be sure, without any sufficient Reason to justify
 “ their doing it. And, as to those who have been
 “ always of the Communion of that Church, I
 “ think them, in general, (continues he) in much
 “ greater Danger *now*, than they were before the
 “ Reformation : And still those in more Danger,
 “ who have lived among those of the *Reformed*
 “ Church, and so were in a better Capacity of be-

[z] Commentary upon the Church Catechism, p. 20. Ed. 5.

“ ing convinced of the Errors of their Way: But
“ most of all do I think the Condition of those to
“ be dangerous, or rather desperate, who, being
“ learned, know their Errors, or, as Priests, are
“ called to instruct the People in the Purity of
“ Christ’s Religion. The Sincere, and Ignorant,
“ who either want Capacity or Opportunity to know
“ the Truth, and, for that Reason, are either sedu-
“ ced from it, or continue ignorant of it, I hope
“ God, who knows the Hearts of all Men, will
“ forgive. The Careless, the Prejudiced, but
“ most of all the obstinately Blind, and Hypo-
“ critical, among them, I cannot acquit, but
“ must leave them to the Judgment of God, who
“ will render to every one according to his De-
“ servings.”

P O S T S C R I P T.

TH E R E being nothing (I find) more com-
mon in the Mouths of *Papists*, when they are
dealing with some Sorts of *Protestants*, to make Con-
verts of them, than these two Questions,—*Pray,*
who built your Churches? and, *Does not your own*
Creed bear Witness to our Church, in that Article,
I believe the holy Catholick Church? I hope the in-
telligent Reader will excuse me, if I detain him yet
a few Moments, while, for the sake of the more Ig-
norant, I offer a few Things, to expose the Imper-
tinence of one of those Questions, and detect the So-
phistry of the other.

To the former, *Who built your Churches?* it may be reply'd—That there were many Churches built here, in the first six Centuries, by the *Britons*, whom one may call *the old Protestants of this Island*. For, all that while, *they* had no more to do with the Bishop and Church of *Rome*, than *we now* have, and were as *ignorant* of the Errors, Corruptions, and Superstitions, whereby that Church, for some past Ages, has been defiled, and stands distinguish'd from other Churches, as *we* are *averse* to them. Afterwards, when Christianity had spread itself more, and the Bishops of *Rome* had gain'd Authority in this Nation, more Churches were wanted, and more, accordingly, were built. And so, doubtless, they would have been, if it had happen'd to be propagated, in the same Degree, without the least Assistance from the Bishops and Church of *Rome*, and tho' they never had had any Footing at all amongst us. [a] How many Churches have been built,

[a] Indeed, it must be confessed, that in the seventh, eighth, and some following, which were the dark, Ages, when the greater Part of the *English* Churches (and Monasteries) were built, certain Notions and Practices prevail'd, which greatly promoted the building of them, and made them rise faster, and in greater Numbers, than, in all Likelihood, they would have done, if the Country had been *then*, as it is *now*, *entirely Protestant*. These Notions and Practices, however, are not much for the Credit of the *Roman* Church, but, in Reality, a greater Shame and Disgrace, than all the Churches that have been built by the Help of them are an Honour to it. The building of many of them was *imposed* as a *Penance* upon grievous Offenders, for the Crimes they had committed, and was *then* esteemed a sufficient Expiation of those Crimes. Others were built by the Help of
Indulgences,

built, in and about *London* only, within these forty Years? And how many, now, are yearly building and rebuilding, at the Expence of private Persons, and by national Contributions, within these Kingdoms, and the *American* Colonies belonging to them? And, whoever shall live some hundred Years hence, when the greater Part of our old Churches will be (probably) fallen to Decay and Ruin, will see very few (in case the *Protestant* Religion keeps its Ground here, as we trust in God it will) but what were of *Protestant* Erection. But what then? Will the *Protestant* Religion be, *then*, truer and better, than it is *now*? Or, is it, *now*, truer

Indulgees, hawk'd about the Country, promising to all who would contribute to the building of them, and in Proportion to the Sums contributed, the Pardon of Sins to be committed, the Power and Efficacy of which was not *then*, in the least, doubted of. Thus rose, (they tell us) or was repaired, the great Church of *St. Paul* at *London*, and thus that of *Nostredame* at *Paris*, to to mention, at present, no other. And, if it be further consider'd, that *all* Sanctity was *then* supposed to consist in building and enriching Churches and Monasteries, it will be no Wonder, that so many were built and enriched in those Times. It has been observed, that *England* *then* produced an incredible Number of Men and Women Saints, and that, amongst these, there were more *Kings* and *Queens*, *Princes* and *Princesses*, and other Persons of high Birth and Station, than were to be found, in Proportion, elsewhere. Which *Rapin* (*Hist. of England*, p. 80. Fol. Edit.) accounts for thus, (and a very likely Account it is) that *Kings* and *Queens*, *Princes* and *Princesses*, and other Persons of high Rank and Fortune, being able to build Churches, easily attained to Saintship, which those of lower Rank, tho' perhaps much better and holier Persons, not having wherewithal to build them, could not do, but lived and died, without leaving the least *Odour of Sanctity* behind them.

and better in our Plantations, where all the Churches have been built by *Protestants*, than it is in *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*, where the greatest Part of them were built by *Papists*? Suppose the *Papists*, at some Time hereafter, should prevail in our Plantations, (as we are informed by the highest Authority [b] they are already very active and busy there) and should take Possession of all the Churches for their Use, and some Protestant should be thereupon impertinent enough to ask, *Who built your Churches? Were they not built by Protestants?* Would any *Papist*, who has a Grain of Sense, would such a one say, this was a pertinent Question? Would he think it suggested a rational Motive, and be determin'd by it, to turn *Protestant*? No surely. Churches, or Places for divine Worship, are built by Men of all Religions, *Heathens*, *Jews*, *Mahometans*, *Christians*, and *Christians* of all Sorts, *Orthodox* and *Heretical*, *Schismatical* and *Catholick*, as there is Want of, or Occasion for them. And, therefore, there's no arguing *for* any Way of Religion, or *against* any, from the Number or Paucity of Churches that have been built by the Professors of it. In short, the Argument is so impertinent and senseless, that it shews the highest Contempt of, and is an Affront to any one's Understanding, to whom it shall be offer'd. And no Priest, or Missionary, or other *Papist*, if he has any Brains, and is not a *Fool* him-

[b] See his Majesty's Letter to the Archbishop of *Canterbury*, 1751, recommending a general Collection, in Favour of the Society for propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

self, would urge any one with it, if he did not take *him* for a Fool, or next to one. For none but such could be expected, by any Man of Sense, to be moved by it.

Now for the other Question, *Does not your own Creed bear Witness to our Church, in this Article, I believe the holy Catholick Church?* If the Article had run in the modern Style of the Church of Rome, *I believe the holy Catholick Apostolick Roman Church*, it would have been, I confess, a fair Testimony in her Favour. But how comes the *Catholick* Church to signify *only* the *Roman* Church? *Catholick* signifies *Universal*, as the Learned will tell you, and the *Catholick* Church the *Universal* Church. And how a Part of the *Catholick*, or *Universal* Church, not a Half, or near a Half of it, can be *THE Catholick*, or *Universal* Church, is as inconceivable, as it is for a *Bit* or *Crum* of a consecrated Wafer to be the *entire* Body of Jesus Christ, when the *whole* of it is not a *Bit* more.

If, also, we consider the *Time* when the Word *Catholick* was first brought into the Creeds, it will appear impossible, that the *Roman* Church could be meant to be pointed out, and denoted by it. The Word is not found in the most antient Creeds, but was introduced by the *Greeks*, and from *them* received by the *Latins*; yet it was at a Time, when the Church of *Rome* was of little more Account in the World, than any other Church. It was, *then*, indeed, esteem'd, and, occasionally, call'd, A *Catholick* Church; and so were all other Churches, which
had

had preserved the *Catholick*, or *Common* Faith of Christians, and had not gone into the Errors, which a few conceited and contentious Men had broach'd and propagated, in Opposition to it, in some particular Province, or Corner of the World. But no one, in those Days, ever call'd it *THE Catholick Church*, *exclusively* of all other Churches. This was strange and unknown Language in those Ages, and never brought into Use, 'till after the Bishops of *Rome* had assumed to themselves, and obtain'd, the Title of *Catholick*, or *Universal Pastor*. After this, the Church of *Rome* (forsooth) must be call'd the *Catholick Church*, and the Members of this Church affected to call themselves, and one another, *Catholicks*, as, indeed, they are, now and then, call'd by *us*, either merely for Discrimination and Distinction, or in the Way of Jeer and Irony, as *they* also, sometimes, call *us* by a very good Name, *The Reformed*. But what does it signify what Names *we* or *they*, *our Church* or *theirs*, either *chuse*, or *happen*, to be call'd by? Does it thence follow, that either *we* or *they*, *their Church* or *ours*, are *really* what is signified and denoted by that Name? And if it has chanced to be mention'd in some of the antient Creeds, as an honourable Character and Distinction of the Church, that is no Argument at all, that we are the very Church which is so characterized, and distinguished.

There were, in the third Century, a Parcel of Hereticks, mention'd by *Epiphanius*, and, in the twelfth Century again, another Sort of Men, both calling themselves *Apostolici*, or the *Apostolicks*; both the
one

one and the other renouncing Marriage; the latter renouncing also, or, however, slighting Infant-Baptism, Invocation of Saints, Purgatory, and Prayer for the Dead, and calling themselves *the true Body of the Church*. Now these, if they had thought of it, might have avail'd themselves of the Testimony and Authority of the *Nicene Creed*, to make Converts to their Churches, or Conventicles, in the same Manner that your *Catholicks* among *us* are used to do, to bring over weak and ignorant *Protestants* to *their Church*. Could not they have said to the ignorant *Romanists* in those Days,—*What says your own Creed, the Nicene Creed, which you yourselves have received?* Are you not there directed to believe, and profess your Belief of, *one Catholick APOSTOLICK Church?* Come therefore into it; join yourselves instantly to the APOSTOLICK Church, and stay not a Moment longer in that *heretical, schismatical, Roman Church*, you are engaged in. This Argumentation is of the same Sort with the other, and not a whit more frivolous and sophistical.

To conclude: The Reason of bringing into the Creeds the Word *Catholick* was no other than to signify, “that the one holy Church, which Jesus Christ gather'd to himself, was not intended, like the *Jewish Church*, to be confined to one small Country, or small People, or, like the Conventicles of Hereticks, to some Spot or Province, where their peculiar Doctrines were propagated and prevailed, but to be diffused through the Face of the whole Earth; and that *all*, however separated from each other,

332 *The Conclusion of this Treatise.*

other by Time or Place, professing the original and primitive Doctrine of Jesus Christ, in all the Essentials thereof, were the constituent Parts, and Members of it." What is there now in this Article, that can be thought to favour the Pretensions of the Church of *Rome*? Nothing surely. On the contrary, it plainly condemns that Church, for confining, as she does, all *Catholicism* to herself, and to those in Communion with her.

F I N I S.



E R R A T A.

- P. 5, l. 5, after the first *them* insert *by Popish Priests and Emissaries.*
- 25, 13, dele *at.*
- 52, 3, insert *are* between *there* and *at.*
- 52, 13, for *Jesuits* read *Jesuits.*
- 65, in the marginal Note [*f*] instead of *Sum. Part 3, Q. XVIII. Art. 12.* read *Com. in 6 Joh. lect. 7.*
- 66, in the Note [*b*] instead of *Offo Trisigentis* read *Otto Trisigentis.*
- 68, 9, instead of *a Life given up and devoted to God* read *giving up and devoting our Lives to God,*
- 85, 11, for *Orders* read *Ardors.*
- 94, 23, for *intreaging* read *intriguing.*
- 99, 31, dele *to.*
- 107, 31, after *it* insert *is.*
- 125, 6, for *him* read *the Bishop of Rome.*
- 172, 20, for *Jests* read *Gests.*
- 175, 13, for *cannot* read *can not*, and dele (*tho' they cannot tell you how Epiphanius knew it*).
- 201, 16, for *Assurements* read *Assumments.*
- 209, 30, for *a Miracle appear greater than a scriptural one* read *his Miracle appear greater than the scriptural one.*
- 222, 16, for *Sinneffa* read *Sinuessa.*
- 241, 8, for *is it* read *it is.*
- 248, in the Running-Title beginning here, instead of *The Danger and Hazard of Communion with the Church of Rome,* read *The Danger and Hazard of Salvation in the Church of Rome.*
- 253, 29, for *Confident* read *Confidant.*
- 303, 16, for *with his Infallibility* read *with all his Infallibility.*
- 316, 12, dele *it.*

False Stoppings corrected.

- 14, 16, after *abroad* put a Comma.
- 37, 12, after *Brother* put a Comma.
- 44, 32, instead of a Comma after *us* put a Semicolon.
- 45, 16, after *meritorious* put a full Stop instead of the Comma.
- 50, 10, after *Quietism* put a Comma.
- 56, 14, dele the Semicolon after the Word *better.*
- 94, 17, after *be* put a full Stop instead of the Comma, and with the Word *If* begin another Sentence.
- 109, 2, dele the Comma after *unerringly.*
- 128, 30, after *Catholicks* dele the Comma.
- 142, 4, of the Note, dele the Comma after *prohibited.*
- 148, 10, dele the Comma after *conceived.*
- 169, 25, put a Comma instead of a Semicolon after *same.*

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